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ABSTRACT

California's Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program requires that large numbers of welfare recipients receive job training and preparation for employment. A survey of the program analyzed early operations in 8 of the first 10 counties to implement it; data were gathered from program staff, case records, and field research of the first 16-24 months of operation. The survey found that the eight study counties were generally successful in developing the network of education and training services called for by the GAIN legislation. A program model was developed to provide basic education and/or job search assistance. The eight counties' programs have evolved in delivering services, managing the flow of registrants through the services, and obtaining compliance with the program's participation requirements. The systems are expanding to meet GAIN's demands. However, only about one-third of those eligible actually attended GAIN programs. The evaluation suggested immediate improvement in program marketing, participant tracking systems, money management, deferral policies, and basic education services. (Appendices provide supplementary tables, survey questions, and 18 references.) (KC)

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GAIN:

Early Implementation Experiences and Lessons

California's Greater Avenues for Independence Program

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April 1989

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**THE GREATER AVENUES FOR INDEPENDENCE
(GAIN) PROGRAM:**

**EARLY IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCES
AND LESSONS**

James Riccio, Barbara Goldman, Gayle Hamilton,
Karin Martinson, Alan Orenstein

with

David Long, Stephen Freedman, Electra Taylor,
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Manpower Demonstration
Research Corporation

April 1989

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's evaluation of the California Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program is funded by a contract from California's State Department of Social Services. This report is the second of a series on the GAIN program in the five-year study. The findings in this report do not necessarily represent the official position or policy of the funder.

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The Authors

PREFACE

In 1985, California created the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program, a major welfare reform initiative. The legislation called for far-reaching change, outlining a welfare employment program more ambitious in scope and scale than any other implemented to date. The bill required that California's 58 counties (which administer welfare and would operate GAIN) offer comprehensive services -- including basic education -- to welfare recipients obligated to participate and also to those who volunteered. It further mandated that welfare recipients engage in employment activities as long as they remained on the rolls.

To accomplish this, counties have had to develop a complex delivery system for providing these services, assure that services were appropriate, involve clients in key aspects of decision-making, and offer child care and other support services. Recognizing the magnitude of change involved, the legislature gave counties six years to plan and implement the full GAIN program.

Importantly, the GAIN legislation called for a careful evaluation of the program, to track its implementation and measure its effectiveness and cost. The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), under contract to the state Department of Social Services, is conducting this evaluation.

This is the second in an ongoing series of reports from this major study. It analyses the early experiences of eight of the first ten counties that took up the challenge of implementing GAIN. It looks at the tasks they faced in translating the legislation into practice and identifies important issues, some of which have already been addressed by GAIN administrators and staff. By nature, a report on early operations usually focuses on implementation problems, since it describes a period when program designers and staff are adapting new procedures and defining reasonable expectations and practices. Because of this, we at MDRC are extremely grateful to the eight counties for serving as the laboratories to test and learn about GAIN, and for letting us observe and record that process. The resulting lessons should prove useful to those counties that are just beginning to operate GAIN, and to other counties that have begun the program and are still wrestling to balance the many elements of this complex undertaking.

But there is another audience that can benefit from California's experience. In 1988, Congress passed the Family Support Act, which included the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program. This legislation offers the states more federal funds, with some new mandates, to support expanded state welfare employment initiatives. Many aspects of the early GAIN experience -- developing coordinated delivery systems, expanding service delivery capacity, understanding the factors that affect program participation, developing case management systems, implementing mandatory basic education programs, and monitoring program participation -- provide lessons for states and counties implementing the JOBS program.

Moving beyond the more modest programs typical of the early 1980s, GAIN represents a relatively intensive effort to expand the skills of welfare recipients while increasing the welfare system's emphasis on work and self-sufficiency. The early findings suggest a promising start, while identifying key issues and choices for the future. The comprehensive evaluation, solidly in place by the date of this report, should continue to provide reliable information on the results of this important initiative.

Judith M. Gueron
President

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California's Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program changes the conditions for receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) by requiring that large numbers of recipients engage in activities designed to move them into jobs and off welfare. Recipients who meet certain criteria are expected to participate continuously -- for as long as they remain on welfare -- in a program sequence that usually begins with basic education for those who lack either a high school diploma or basic skills. In contrast, mandatory programs in most other states have imposed only short-term obligations, and none has made such extensive use of education. GAIN is further distinguished by its scale: California has almost one-sixth of the nation's welfare caseload and the GAIN budget far exceeds the amount currently spent on any other state's welfare employment initiative.

California's 58 counties are responsible for administering AFDC and GAIN under the supervision of the State Department of Social Services. This report, the second by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) in its evaluation of GAIN, analyzes the program's early operations in eight of the first ten counties to implement it. Three of the counties -- Fresno, Kern, and Stanislaus -- are agricultural areas in California's large central valley. Two others, San Mateo and Santa Clara (which includes the city of San Jose), are urban counties located in the San Francisco Bay area. The remaining three counties -- Butte, Napa, and Ventura -- include both small cities and rural areas. Fresno and Santa Clara have large welfare caseloads of more than 20,000; the others have between 1,000 and 15,000 cases each. About 14 percent of the state's welfare recipients live in these eight counties.

The report relies on field research, a survey of program staff, and program caseload records to analyze the first 16 to 24 months of GAIN operations in these counties. Participation rates are presented for individuals who registered with GAIN during the first two to 12 months of operations, a start-up period when the programs were still developing basic policies and procedures. Future reports will assess GAIN's later operational experience, the cost of the program, and the program's effectiveness in increasing recipients' earnings and reducing their reliance on welfare.

An Overall Assessment

As indicated in MDRC's first report,¹ the GAIN program is one of the most ambitious initiatives of its kind in the United States, requiring an unprecedented degree of local planning and inter-organizational coordination to put its basic elements into place. Indeed, recognizing

¹John Wallace and David Long, GAIN: Planning and Early Implementation (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1987).

the magnitude of the adaptations demanded of county administrators and staff, and the substantial discretion counties were given to design the program, the state legislature allowed the counties up to six years from the 1985 enactment of GAIN to plan and fully implement their programs.

As expected, GAIN evolved during its first two years, with administrators learning by trial and error as they developed new programmatic features, administrative procedures, and institutional arrangements. It is thus important to understand that the results from this study are from the early period of program implementation and, in particular, that the participation findings reported below do not reflect the full effects of this evolution.

The eight study counties were generally successful in developing the network of education and training services called for by the GAIN legislation. It is more difficult to assess the counties' achievement in implementing the program's mandate that certain welfare recipients participate in GAIN services. For example, during the six-month follow-up period, 78 percent of GAIN registrants were, for at least part of this time, in statuses consistent with GAIN's provisions: they had either participated in an activity or, by the end of this period, were not required to do so because of employment or other reasons. But the other 22 percent of registrants were not covered by one of these statuses during that period, although staff had initiated GAIN's enforcement procedures with a portion of them. (These findings are for registrants who were single heads of households with school-age children; the findings for heads of two-parent AFDC-U households were similar but are not discussed in this Executive Summary.)

While over three-quarters of the registrants had reached an authorized program status during this period, about one-third of all registrants (34 percent) attended a GAIN activity. Substantially fewer participated on a continuous basis during the time they were registered for the program. Almost all of those who did participate engaged in basic education or job search, or continued in approved education or training activities begun on their own before entering GAIN.

The participation rate, which was lower than planned, partly reflects unanticipated problems encountered in operating this complex program. However, it also reflects normal turnover in the welfare caseload and circumstances explicitly recognized by the GAIN legislation as expected reasons for nonattendance. Overall, 37 percent of the nonparticipants were not required to be in GAIN by the end of the follow-up period. They were "deregistered" from the program, in some cases because they had left welfare, or had remained on welfare and obtained full-time employment or had given birth to a child. Another 30 percent were temporarily "deferred" from participation because of part-time employment, illness, or other reasons.

Although precise comparisons are impossible because of differences in program models, target populations, and program settings, GAIN's participation rate falls at the lower end of the range of rates for other welfare employment programs studied by MDRC. However, those initiatives were based on much simpler models than GAIN, usually emphasizing a single track of job search and unpaid work experience, with shorter-term participation requirements. In those programs roughly one-half of the targeted individuals participated at least one day in

activities within follow-up periods somewhat longer than those used in this report.

The GAIN Model

The legislation prescribes a sequence of program services that varies according to an individual's welfare history, employment experience, and education level. Figure 1 illustrates this sequence in simplified form.

Following registration at an income maintenance office and referral to GAIN, an individual attends an orientation and appraisal and takes a basic literacy and mathematics test. The registrant is then either enrolled in GAIN or deferred. Participation in an initial component and any subsequent activities is expected to continue until the individual finds employment, leaves welfare, or is no longer required to participate for other reasons.

GAIN has two primary service tracks. On the basic education track, registrants who do not have a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate, cannot speak English, or fail the skills test usually go directly into one of three programs: adult basic education, GED preparation, or English language instruction. (Registrants on this track may elect to pursue job search assistance first, but must then enroll in a basic education class if they do not find a job. Alternatively, they may choose to participate in job search and basic education concurrently.) The second track is for registrants who are determined not to need basic education; they are usually referred first to a job search activity.

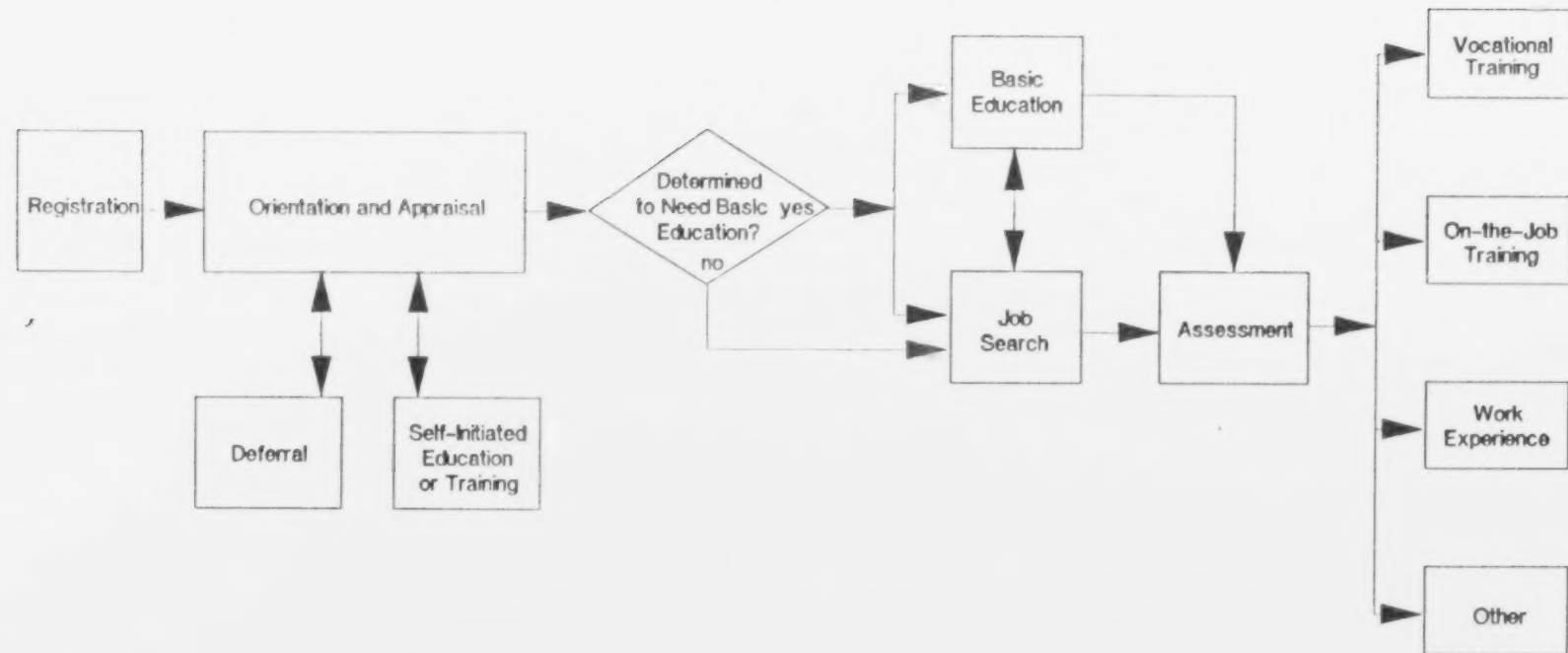
Registrants who complete basic education or job search (or both) without having found a job must, after a formal assessment, enter another activity specified in an individual employment plan. Possible activities include vocational or on-the-job training, work experience, supported work, or other forms of education and training. In addition, as shown in Figure 1, "self-initiated" registrants who are already in approved services when they attend orientation and appraisal may continue in those activities for up to two years.

At the time they are appraised, registrants sign contracts with the county welfare department which obligate the county to provide services (including child care) and the registrant to participate in specified activities. Registrants who are required to participate but who do not comply with program rules face a multi-step enforcement process, beginning with a determination of whether they had "good cause" for not participating. The next step is conciliation, which includes attempts to persuade registrants to comply. If this fails, registrants are placed once in "money management," in which their next three monthly welfare checks are sent to a substitute payee who makes expenditures on their behalf. If registrants still fail to comply, the welfare department imposes a financial sanction, temporarily reducing or terminating the welfare grant.

Findings on Implementation and Operations

The eight counties' programs have evolved in three important areas: delivering services, managing the flow of registrants through the services, and obtaining compliance with the program's participation requirement. This Executive Summary addresses each of these topics in

FIGURE 1
SIMPLIFIED DEPICTION OF THE GAIN PROGRAM MODEL



NOTE: Registrants can leave the GAIN program at any point because of employment or deregistration from GAIN for other reasons.

turn, and then discusses the policy implications of the findings. (The report does not directly study the effects on county decisionmaking of the administration of GAIN at the state level.)

Findings on Service Delivery

The GAIN legislation requires the counties to provide a complex array of services through coordination among many different agencies and service providers.

- o The service networks set up by the welfare departments, though different from county to county, were generally able to deliver the extensive services required by the legislation.**

The interagency networks created by the county welfare departments involved, to varying degrees, the six institutional partners identified in the GAIN legislation: adult schools, regional occupational programs and centers, community colleges, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) agencies, the Employment Development Department, and child-care referral agencies. In all but one of the eight counties, the welfare department managed the delivery of services -- overseeing both the service network and the movement of registrants through the service sequence -- but gave other agencies the responsibility for actually delivering most services.

The service networks were particularly complex in the two counties with large welfare caseloads, Santa Clara and Fresno, which relied on numerous schools and agencies. Nevertheless, all eight counties were able to arrange for the required services.

- o Educational systems expanded to meet GAIN's demand. They used existing facilities and teaching methods, but some schools adapted their services for GAIN enrollees.**

An adequate number of basic education openings were available in all the counties despite the substantial proportion of registrants who lacked a high school diploma or scored low on the basic skills test. This is partly due to GAIN's reliance on the existing educational system, especially adult schools which could expand their capacity relatively easily, rather than on new programs that would have taken more time to develop. It also partly reflects the fact that, as discussed later, fewer registrants participated in education than were determined to need it.

In most counties, the welfare department left decisions on the content of educational services to the providers, who typically used the same instructional methods already in place for other student populations. However, some educational providers did modify their programs, for example, by incorporating life-management and employment skills into their curricula to accommodate GAIN's vocational focus. Moreover, teachers and administrators reported the need to provide special counseling to some GAIN students who, unlike others attending adult education, were not necessarily in school by choice.

- o In providing job search assistance, some counties emphasized rapid job entry, whereas others encouraged registrants to be more selective in seeking higher paying jobs that often required additional education or training.**

GAIN staff provided the initial job search services -- job club and supervised job search -- in five of the eight counties; the Employment Development Department provided these services in the other three. The structure of the services was similar across the counties -- with job club providing three weeks of group sessions several days per week and supervised job search offering individual guidance -- but the emphasis was not. Some counties sought to move registrants quickly into jobs, using the labor market as a screening device to determine who needed more intensive (and expensive) services. Other counties were more apt to encourage registrants to seek higher paying jobs based on the conviction that this would improve their chances of leaving and staying off welfare. In these counties, registrants who did not immediately find a "good job" were encouraged to view job search as an informational experience that would help them find employment after completing more education or training.

o Participation in activities other than basic education and job search was limited.

Participation in vocational education and training was lower than anticipated in all eight counties. Few registrants other than self-initiated enrollees entered these activities within the six-month follow-up period because few reached the later assessment stage of the GAIN sequence. In some counties, the limited number of GAIN enrollees in vocational training strained relationships with providers, particularly those that had invested resources to meet the expected high demand for their services. Moreover, the use of GAIN-funded child-care services was also lower than expected. (The reasons for this are being investigated and will be addressed in a separate report to be issued later this year.)

These and other factors have resulted in lower GAIN expenditures and less pressure on service delivery systems than policymakers had anticipated. Thus far, only the educational system has had to expand significantly. This system may face additional pressure in the future, since GAIN registrants in basic education remain there a long time. It is also likely that vocational training and child-care agencies will face greater expansion challenges in future years.

Findings on Case Management

The process of managing the flow of registrants into and through services includes several tasks: getting individuals into the program, making sure they enter appropriate activities and receive necessary support services, monitoring their attendance and progress, and responding to individual problems as they arise.

o Seven of the eight counties separated GAIN case management from income maintenance work. Over time, however, most counties sought to strengthen the link between the two.

The first case management function -- seeing to it that GAIN registrants attend orientation -- inevitably spans a welfare department's income maintenance unit (where registration occurs) and the GAIN office (where orientation takes place). Most welfare administrators decided to keep these functions physically and organizationally separate, mainly

because they viewed income maintenance workers' focus on eligibility issues and benefit calculations as incompatible with the more positive environment desired for GAIN. Indeed, in a survey of GAIN staff and income maintenance workers, GAIN staff reported higher morale and more supportive interactions with welfare recipients. GAIN staff were also more educated and less likely to view welfare receipt as the "fault" of the individual.

In most counties, income maintenance workers were not well prepared to describe GAIN or encourage registrants to participate. Some administrators began to address this problem through staff training and the creation of staff liaison positions between the income maintenance and GAIN units. In one county, most case management functions were initially assigned to income maintenance workers, but this proved to be too demanding and some of the tasks were eventually reassigned to GAIN staff.

- o **Monitoring and enforcing registrants' participation was more burdensome than most county administrators had anticipated, and procedures had to be modified.**

Factors contributing to this difficulty included the lack of timely data on participants' attendance and the absence of fully automated information systems. Most counties moved to reduce these problems by obtaining more timely attendance data (for example, through on-site reviews and requiring service providers to submit daily or weekly reports) and making efforts to develop improved automated systems.

The counties' responses to nonparticipating registrants differed in the promptness with which they contacted nonparticipants and the relative emphasis placed on informal persuasion (sometimes including home visits) versus more formal enforcement measures. Over time, most counties reported a greater willingness to use the formal enforcement methods, including financial sanctions, although during the study period only about 6 percent of registrants were placed in money management and under 1 percent had their grants reduced or terminated. Many staff questioned the effectiveness of what they saw as a cumbersome, multi-stage enforcement process that sometimes took a year to complete. They voiced particular frustration with the money management procedures.

- o **The counties with large welfare caseloads and complex service networks increasingly specialized their case management functions in order to improve communications with service providers and the GAIN staff's ability to monitor registrants' participation.**

The case management systems initially implemented by the counties varied in significant ways because of different philosophies and local conditions. Several counties originally opted for "generalist" case management approaches, in which registrants stayed with a single staff member throughout their tenure in GAIN. Other counties adopted more specialized approaches, relying on different staff to perform specified case management functions. Administrators in the large counties came to view specialization as imperative despite the need for additional communication among the staff. In several counties, for example, some staff conducted the intake process (orientation and appraisal), while others monitored registrants'

participation in particular GAIN activities.

- o **County differences in registrant-to-staff ratios were substantial and help account for variations in monitoring and enforcement practices. The effect on participation rates is, however, less obvious.**

The burden of ongoing case management varied widely across the counties, in large part because of differences in registrant-to-staff ratios. These ratios ranged from roughly 50:1 in some counties to over 200:1 in one of the counties. High ratios did not necessarily preclude prompt reporting of attendance, since much of this responsibility was placed on the service providers. High ratios did, however, delay case managers' responses to registrants who were not participating. They also affected the nature of their interaction with registrants and made it more difficult to rely on persuasion instead of (or in addition to) penalties to increase participation. On the other hand, high registrant-to-staff ratios permitted some counties to process a greater proportion of their GAIN-eligible caseloads.

The available evidence does not reveal a clear relationship between a county's registrant-to-staff ratio and its participation outcomes. Counties whose staff had smaller caseloads did not have consistently higher rates of registrant attendance at orientation or entry into service components. However, many GAIN staff reported that closer monitoring and more intensive involvement with registrants -- practices facilitated by smaller caseloads -- would improve registrants' attendance while enrolled in activities.

The absence of a clear relationship between registrant-to-staff ratios and participation rates may be due to the fact that a variety of county conditions and practices affected these outcomes, with staff caseload size not necessarily the most important. However, lower ratios may have affected the nature or appropriateness of assigned activities.

- o **The orientation and appraisal sessions often had an impersonal, bureaucratic tone.**

Most of what registrants learned about GAIN before they began to participate came from the orientation, a group meeting almost always conducted by GAIN staff. In many counties, the staff provided information by reading aloud sections of the contract between the county and the registrant. This pro forma introduction to GAIN may have left registrants with a hazy understanding of the program's services and opportunities. It may also have created the impression that GAIN is merely another administrative requirement of welfare.

At the appraisal interview following orientation, the staff determined registrants' initial program activities and discussed child-care options. In some of the counties using specialized staff to conduct appraisals, assignments were outlined in a matter-of-fact way, usually without much probing into registrants' longer-term career goals or personal circumstances. This enabled the staff to process a higher volume of registrants.

In those counties with generalist case managers and low registrant-to-staff ratios, the staff tended to conduct longer appraisals in which they explored registrants' career ambitions and life

circumstances in greater depth and described program options more fully. This appeared to foster more informed registrant choice, an explicit goal of the GAIN legislation, but it obviously took much more staff time.

Findings on Participation

As noted earlier, participation rates were lower than program planners had expected. Previous research suggests that higher rates would have been feasible but, given normal welfare caseload turnover and GAIN's rules governing deferrals and deregistrations, much higher rates were probably unrealistic. Many mandatory registrants left welfare prior to entering a GAIN activity. Others found jobs that, particularly because of California's relatively high welfare grants (\$663 monthly for a family of three), did not pay enough for them to leave welfare but did provide enough hours of work to defer them from program participation requirements. Moreover, many registrants had health problems or family crises that the staff judged to be legitimate reasons for deferral. Thus, all registrants were not available to participate in GAIN at any given time. The program's participation rates should be evaluated in this light.

Figure 2 summarizes participation patterns for a typical group of 100 registrants, based on a random sample of 966 single-parent (AFDC-FG) GAIN-mandatory registrants in seven of the eight counties. The figure indicates the number of these registrants who, within six months, reached each program stage: orientation, an initial GAIN activity, assessment, and post-assessment services. The figure also displays, for the first two stages after registration, data on the recorded reasons for nonparticipation, including deferral and deregistration. This helps show the extent to which nonparticipation was for reasons consistent with the GAIN legislation.

- o **Within six months of registration, almost one-third of the registrants never attended orientation, another third attended orientation but did not start a program activity, and the final third participated in GAIN services. Substantially fewer participated continuously.**

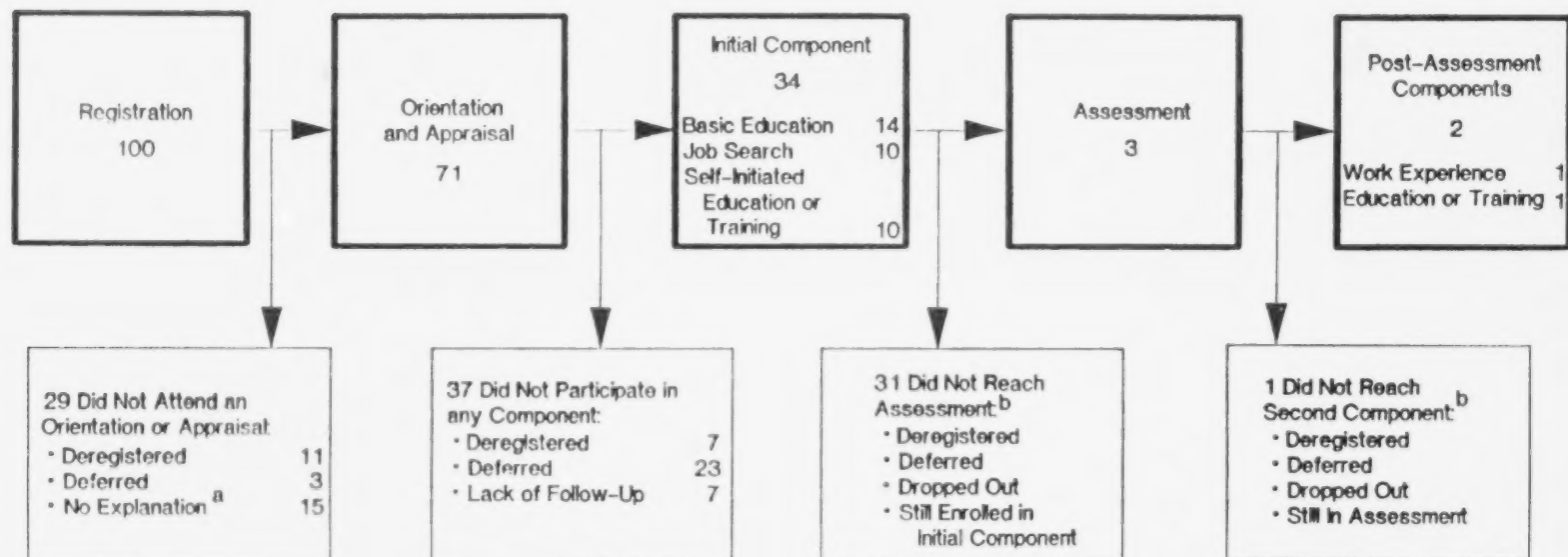
Although participation levels varied by county, most registrants either did not attend orientation or, if they attended, did not start a program activity. As Figure 2 shows, of 100 typical single-parent registrants, 29 did not attend orientation or appraisal. Of the 71 who did attend, 34 then participated for at least one day in an initial component, but 37 did not. Thus, about half of those who attended orientation eventually entered a service component.

Eleven of the 100 typical registrants -- or 32 percent of those who ever attended a GAIN component -- participated continuously (not shown in figure). Continuous participation is defined for this study as beginning an activity and remaining enrolled for at least 70 percent of the time an individual was registered after orientation.

- o **Roughly two-thirds of all nonparticipants had been deregistered or deferred. As a result, by the end of six months after registration, more than three-quarters of all registrants had either participated in the program or were not required to do so.**

FIGURE 2

PARTICIPATION PATTERNS AND REASONS FOR NONPARTICIPATION
FOR 100 TYPICAL MANDATORY SINGLE-PARENT REGISTRANTS
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF GAIN REGISTRATION



NOTES: The 100 typical registrants represent the experiences of a 966-person random sample of single-parent (AFDC-FG) GAIN-mandatory registrants from seven study counties.

Findings for heads of two-parent households, AFDC-U registrants, were similar to those presented above for single parents.

^a GAIN casefiles included no information explaining why these registrants did not attend orientation.

^b The listed reasons are possible explanations for nonparticipation. Data showing the actual importance of each reason were not collected for this study.

Figure 2 shows that among the 29 typical registrants who did not attend orientation, 11 were deregistered from the program and another 3 were deferred. It also illustrates that of the 37 individuals who attended orientation but never entered an initial component, 7 were deregistered following orientation and 23 were deferred from participation during their appraisals. Hence, 44 of the 66 nonparticipants, or two-thirds, were either deregistered or deferred.

According to GAIN casefiles, about 20 percent of all single-parent GAIN-mandatory registrants obtained employment within six months of registration. (Other research has shown that casefiles, which include only employment known to staff, underestimate the level of employment.) About half of these employed registrants (or 10 percent of the total) were deferred from participation because of part-time employment. This was the most common reason for deferral, accounting for almost 40 percent of all deferrals.

In all, 78 of the 100 registrants were in statuses consistent with GAIN policies at some time during the six-month follow-up period: 34 participated, another 18 were deregistered, and an additional 26 were deferred either before orientation or during their appraisals. Of the 22 individuals who did not fall into one of these three categories, a few were involved in the conciliation or penalty process.

- o **The low rate of attendance at orientations was unexpected and varied across counties. Staff responses to nonattenders, as well as other factors, affected attendance rates.**

Many of those who eventually attended a GAIN orientation did so only after repeated contacts by GAIN staff. The evidence suggests that orientation attendance depended on several factors, including how quickly GAIN staff scheduled orientations and followed up on nonattendance, the way in which welfare eligibility workers presented GAIN to registrants, and welfare caseload dynamics such as the movement of individuals into employment or off welfare.

Generally, the counties which followed up with nonattenders soon after registration had higher rates of orientation attendance than those which devoted fewer staff resources to this effort. Some of the nonattenders, however, had left welfare by the end of the six-month period and others had been deferred or deregistered for other reasons.

- o **Participation was more common in basic education than in job search, an important departure from previous welfare employment programs. Almost 60 percent of registrants who attended an orientation were determined to need basic education, and of this group one-third participated in this component for at least one day.**

As Figure 2 shows, 14 out of 100 typical registrants participated in basic education, while 10 out of 100 participated in job search. About half of those in basic education were in adult basic education (ABE), and the remainder were in GED or English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. It is noteworthy that about half of the registrants who attended an orientation lacked a high school diploma or GED certificate. About one-third of those who attended failed

the basic skills test, usually in addition to lacking a diploma or certificate. Moreover, most of those who did not pass the basic skills test failed the math portion but passed the reading portion.

Half of the registrants determined to need basic education were referred to this activity. The remainder were not referred because they were granted a deferral (the most common reason), deregistered from GAIN, or assigned to job search or another activity.

- o **The early evidence and current GAIN policy suggest that many participants in basic education will stay for a long time.**

Basic education potentially entails a long-term commitment for registrants. Although the average length of stay is uncertain at this point, more than half of the mandatory registrants who attended classes were still there four months after orientation. This finding may reflect the registrants' low skill levels and the absence of explicit criteria for completing the educational programs. The GAIN regulations offer little guidance for deciding when registrants have completed ESL or ABE, and the counties have consequently adopted different policies. (GED instruction ends when the registrant obtains a GED certificate.) Some counties required that registrants in ABE obtain a GED certificate before proceeding to the next activity (usually job search), whereas other counties required these students to meet locally established benchmarks. Many GAIN staff expressed frustration with the lack of clear guidance on exit criteria.

- o **During the period covered by this study, very few registrants entered post-assessment services such as vocational education or training. Most who participated in these activities were already in them at the time of orientation.**

As Figure 2 shows, only 3 out of 100 typical registrants reached the assessment stage within six months and only 2 out of 100 entered a post-assessment service. Individuals who participated in education or training programs usually did so as an initial, "self-initiated" activity, which accounted for 10 out of 100 registrants.

In contrast to the legislatively prescribed rules on the initial assignment to basic education or job search, GAIN allows more choices at the assessment stage. The assessment of registrants' work history and career interests and capabilities, usually performed by someone from outside the welfare department, drew mixed reactions from GAIN staff. Many reported that the information was not always helpful. In several counties, GAIN staff began to work with the assessors to clarify GAIN's objectives and policies and reported that this improved the process.

Policy Implications

Since the passage of the GAIN legislation in 1985, California has made considerable progress in launching a complex welfare employment initiative. The experiences of eight of the first ten counties to start the program highlight a number of important issues and lessons that need to be considered as implementation continues.

As this is done, it is important to bear in mind the context within which GAIN operates. California provides relatively high welfare grants and implements GAIN through a state supervised but county administered system designed to accommodate variation in local philosophy and program operations. The normal behavior of the welfare population must also be taken into account, since it affects whether registrants will continue to be subject to the participation requirement. For example, many will move off the rolls, get jobs (sometimes at wages too low to leave welfare), or experience periodic emergencies.

These contextual factors continue to influence GAIN's implementation, but policymakers and program administrators also face several key decisions directly within their control. Some involve recommended steps that seem clearly necessary to strengthen program operations; others raise more difficult choices requiring explicit tradeoffs in the balance between state prescriptiveness and local flexibility, and in the desired use of resources.

The findings point to three areas in which immediate steps seem warranted.

- o **Program marketing:** In many cases, eligibility workers and GAIN staff did not provide registrants with adequate information about the program. In most counties, GAIN was not presented in a fashion that encouraged involvement or maximized informed client choices. More informative and engaging presentations of GAIN could be developed at minimal cost and could improve registrants' understanding of program services and their obligation to participate.
- o **Automated participant tracking systems:** In all but the smallest counties, efficiently managing a complex program such as GAIN requires effective automated tracking systems. Until recently, their absence impeded GAIN management in many counties. As newly developed systems are installed, administrators should closely monitor their accuracy and adequacy for program and case management, and ensure that staff receive appropriate training.
- o **Use of money management:** County staff reported that money management, as implemented, did not appear to encourage participation and was difficult to administer. The state should reexamine the usefulness of this approach.

In other areas, the need for action hinges on the choices policymakers and program administrators make in resolving critical tradeoffs. For example, implementation of state policies has varied substantially across the counties. Depending on one's perspective, this may be viewed either as desirable local flexibility or as creating excessive inconsistency. Several issues also involve tradeoffs in the use of financial and staff resources: Priorities must be set in allocating resources to alternative tasks and in balancing the provision of an intensive, closely monitored (and therefore expensive) program experience with the goal of reaching a large number of registrants.

- o **Deferral policy:** Deferral practices, which varied both within and across counties, were among the most important influences on participation rates. To

the extent that higher participation rates are deemed important, the state and counties should examine the standards for granting deferrals, the duration of deferrals, and the staff resources devoted to monitoring deferrals. However, reductions in the number and duration of deferrals would entail greater costs for monitoring and services.

- o **Registrant monitoring:** Monitoring the flow of registrants into and through the GAIN program requires staff resources. These can be concentrated more heavily on increasing the number of registrants reaching GAIN (since many either do not attend orientation or do not participate in a program activity after orientation) or on reserving resources to facilitate more intensive and continuous participation by those who actually enter program services. Policy in this area should take account of the fact that some nonparticipants leave welfare or are deregistered for other reasons without program intervention.

- o **Basic education:** There are three issues in this area:

Exit criteria. The absence of clear criteria for ending registrants' participation in basic education has led counties to set their own policies and often to give staff a great deal of discretion. Counties expressed interest in state guidance, but it is not obvious what criteria should be established: whether, for example, exit criteria should be based on achievement of certain competencies, the time spent in basic education, or a combination of these and other measures.

Link with skills training. In most counties, basic education preceded skills training, and the curricula of the two activities were not linked. Many county staff and service providers believed that closer links would help registrants see the value of basic education and thereby improve their motivation to attend classes. The state may want to authorize, for all counties, the option of simultaneous enrollment in basic education and training and encourage better coordination between the two.

Development of alternative approaches. GAIN registrants differ from other adults in basic education because, among other factors, their attendance is mandatory and they have a greater vocational focus. Although a few educational agencies made adaptations to the needs of GAIN registrants, program administrators may want to experiment further with alternative approaches.

- o **The role of job clubs:** The eight counties showed striking differences in their approaches to job clubs. Some emphasized immediate job entry, whereas others suggested that registrants be more selective and take more advantage of GAIN's education and training services. Given the resource and programmatic implications of these county variations, the state may want to offer guidance in this area.

This report suggests that the state and counties have successfully addressed some of the implementation challenges of GAIN. Through their experience with others, they have called attention to many remaining issues. The detailed discussion in the body of the report provides further insight into these subjects, as will the continuing research on GAIN's operations, impacts, and costs.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ADA	Average Daily Attendance
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
AFDC-FG	Aid to Families with Dependent Children - Family Group
AFDC-U	Aid to Families with Dependent Children - Unemployed Parent
CASAS	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
CWEP	Community Work Experience Program
EDD	Employment Development Department
EDP	Employment Development Plan
EPP	Employment Preparation Program
ESL	English as a Second Language
FSA	Family Support Act of 1988
GAIN	Greater Avenues for Independence
GED	General Educational Development (high school equivalency) Certificate
JOBS	Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
JTPO	Job Training Partnership Office of the Employment Development Department
MDRC	Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation
OJT	On-the-Job Training
PREP	Pre-Employment Preparation
SDE	State Department of Education
SDSS	State Department of Social Services
SWIM	Saturation Work Initiative Model
WIN	Work Incentive Program

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1985 the California legislature enacted a new welfare employment program, the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program, one of the most ambitious initiatives of its kind in the United States. Designed to replace the state's Work Incentive Program (WIN), the GAIN legislation requires that the 58 counties in the state offer a wide range of services to welfare recipients who meet certain criteria, usually beginning with basic education, and that recipients use these services continuously until they leave welfare or are officially excused from participating.

This report analyzes the early experiences in operating GAIN in eight of the first ten counties to do so: Butte, Fresno, Kern, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Stanislaus, and Ventura. Each county's GAIN program began serving registrants between June 1986 and January 1987, and the counties' combined GAIN caseloads accounted for the vast majority of all persons registered for GAIN during its first two years in operation. Their experiences are thus representative of GAIN's early history.

How this set of diverse counties put the complex goals and provisions of the GAIN legislation into practice is the primary focus of this report. The report also describes the evolution of the county programs by identifying the major problems they initially encountered and the program modifications they later adopted. Those experiences have yielded lessons that may be useful to state and local policymakers, administrators, and other groups in California interested in how GAIN works at the local level. And because GAIN bears close resemblance to the comprehensive federal Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program (JOBS) contained in the Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988, the findings in this report may be of use to officials in other states and localities as well.

This report is the second in a series on GAIN by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation under contract to the California State Department of Social Services. Future reports will analyze the operational experiences of other counties, patterns of child care utilization, the effects of GAIN on welfare recipients' employment and earnings and their welfare dependency, and the economic benefits and costs of the program from the perspectives of the welfare population and the state budget.¹

¹MDRC's first report on GAIN discussed the process at the state and county levels through which county plans for implementing GAIN were developed. (See Wallace and Long, 1987.) MDRC's final report on program implementation, impacts, and benefits and costs is scheduled for (continued...)

I. The Policy Context of GAIN

The GAIN legislation grew out of a deepening concern among California legislators to reduce welfare dependency, and their concern that WIN -- the federally mandated employment program for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) -- was not capable of achieving this goal. Enacted in 1967, WIN was required in all states. Registration for the program was mandatory for all able-bodied, unemployed heads of two-parent families (primarily fathers) and, since 1971, single parents with no children under age 6 (mostly mothers). Unless exempted or deferred because of illness or some other permissible reason, recipients who failed to register or participate in the program were to be sanctioned through a reduction or elimination of their AFDC grant. In practice, however, the WIN program served a relatively small share of its mandatory registrants, and its staff imposed sanctions only infrequently. Two main reasons account for WIN's low participation rates: inadequate funding to operate the program on the scale necessary to serve the large numbers of mandatory registrants, and the discretion allowed program operators to grant deferrals.

After passage of the federal Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, which granted states and localities an opportunity to experiment with changes in their WIN programs, many new welfare employment initiatives were instituted across the country. During the intervening years over half of the states, including California, established programs that require AFDC recipients to participate in job search activities or unpaid work experience, or both. Some of those programs also include education and training activities, but usually not as a primary focus. Most also attempted to set a realistic participation mandate, a goal that was consistent with the growing political support for reciprocal obligations for welfare recipients. Finally, most of the programs have operated in only selected regions of the state, not statewide.²

II. Two Visions of Welfare Reform in California

GAIN is the product of a compromise between two groups in California that wanted to change the welfare system but had different visions of what the new system should be. Both groups saw the existing system as demeaning to welfare recipients, encouraging their dependence, and as financially burdensome for the state. Both sought reforms that would enable recipients to move off the welfare rolls and into unsubsidized employment, ultimately reducing the cost of welfare. They differed, however, in their beliefs about the type of program best suited to meeting these goals, and they had to reach a compromise over various program elements before they could produce new legislation.

¹(...continued)

completion in late 1992. Several shorter reports or papers are also to be completed in the interim period, including a paper on child care utilization due in March 1989.

²For a summary of findings from MDRC studies of welfare employment programs in eight states, see Gueron (1987).

In developing the new program, legislators had to take into consideration several special features of California's welfare system. First, welfare grants in California were (and still are) among the highest in the nation. High grant levels can serve as a disincentive for recipients to leave welfare for employment, particularly for low-paying jobs. At the same time, however, they give recipients the opportunity to work and still remain on welfare, which may not be the case in states with low grant levels. Second, the diversity of California's 58 counties meant that the program legislated had to be workable across a wide range of local conditions. Third, the welfare system in California is administered by the counties, under the supervision of the State Department of Social Services. The counties would therefore have considerable control over the actual implementation of the program.

One group of reformers initially favored a relatively short-term program of mandatory job search followed, for participants who did not find jobs, by unpaid work experience (or "workfare"). This relatively inexpensive approach emphasized quick entry into the labor force, even if the jobs taken were low-skilled, reflecting a view that work was almost always better than welfare because it reduced dependency and offered opportunities for career advancement once the program participants took a job. This group intended the participation mandate, like that of similar programs then being tried in other states, to serve several objectives: to encourage otherwise reluctant recipients to take advantage of the opportunities the program offered them; to discourage people with alternative sources of income from seeking welfare; and to change the terms of welfare, from a system of benefits conditional only on the recipient's level of income and wealth to one that also required the recipient's commitment to try to become self-supporting. Thus, the program would obligate eligible welfare recipients to participate in its job search or work experience activities in exchange for welfare benefits. Failure to do so without good cause would be penalized through a reduction or elimination of the welfare grant.

The other group favored a broader range of services, with a strong emphasis on education and skills training. Members of this group believed that a model stressing human capital investment, though expensive in the short run, would greatly expand the employment opportunities available to welfare recipients and decrease the rate at which former recipients returned to the rolls. By reducing recidivism, this approach would decrease the cost of welfare in the long run. This group wanted assignments to program services to reflect registrants' individual interests, circumstances, and capabilities, and they sought means to encourage recipients to shape their own futures by allowing them to choose the services to which they were assigned. Participant choice was considered not only fair but also essential to securing registrants' commitment to the opportunities the program offered. This group also favored protecting recipients from having to take jobs that would make them financially worse off once they left welfare, as well as less onerous penalties for noncompliance than financial sanctions.

These two groups of legislators thus advocated approaches to welfare reform that pointed in different directions, most notably in three general areas: how much emphasis to place on quick job entry versus human capital investment; how strongly to emphasize registrant choice of services; and how strictly to define and enforce the participation requirement. In reaching a compromise, the legislators attempted to design a coherent program model that would

incorporate the major elements of both views.

III. The Legislative Compromise

The compromise attending the legislative debate over GAIN resulted in a complex program model. The first part of this section describes the numerous program activities included in GAIN, as well as the sequence registrants must follow in the course of their participation. The second part of the section explains the compromises the program model was designed to achieve between the two views of welfare reform just described.

A. The GAIN Program Model

Figure 1.1 depicts the sequences mandated for registrants' participation in the various educational, training, and employment activities offered in GAIN. Table 1.1 defines the nature and duration of those activities, as well as the support services available to help registrants take advantage of the activities.

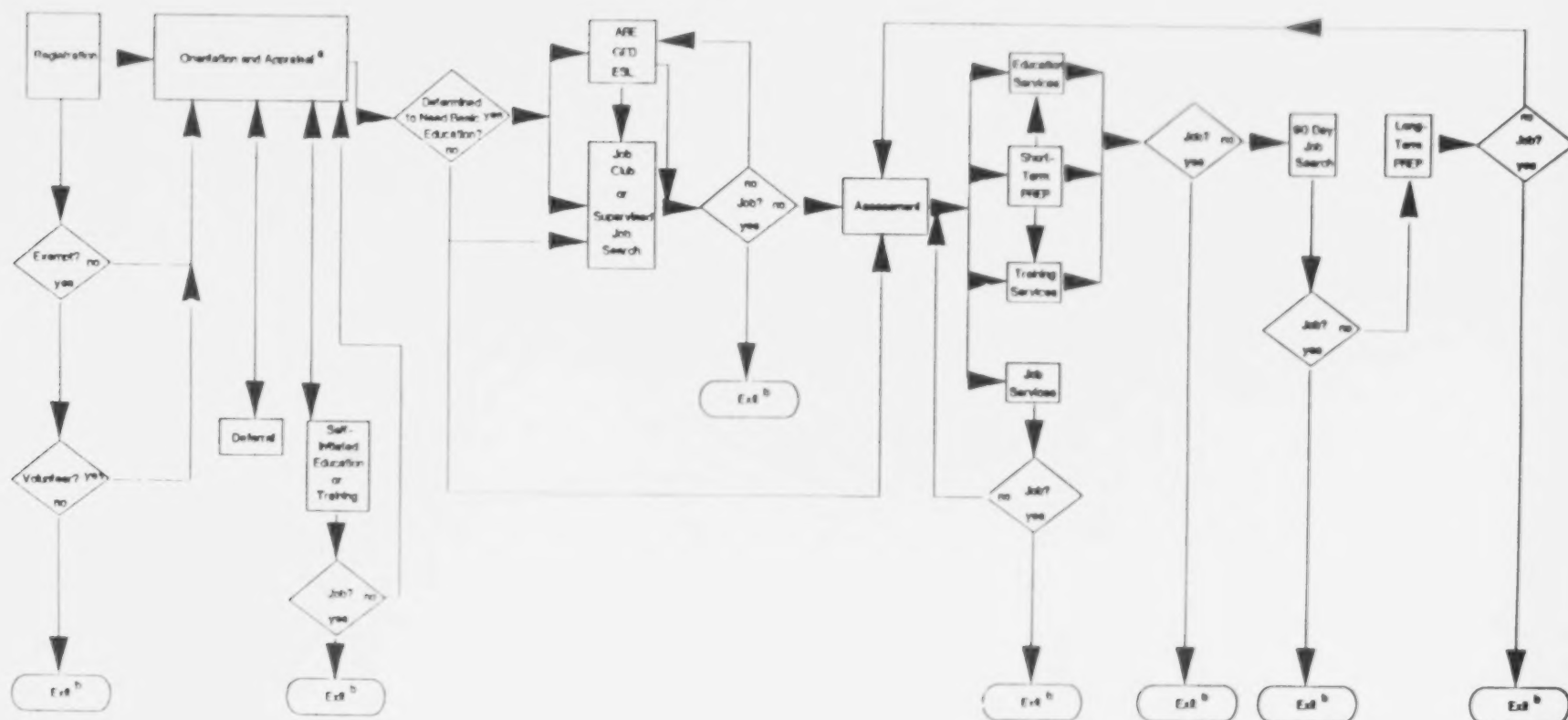
The GAIN model begins at the county welfare department's income maintenance office. Here, when determining initial or continuing eligibility for welfare, the staff are to register GAIN-mandatory AFDC applicants and recipients for the program, and offer to register recipients who are GAIN-exempt but might wish to volunteer for the program. All applicants and recipients are required to register unless they meet special exemption criteria (the federal exemption criteria for WIN, outlined in Appendix Table A.1).³ After completing the registration process, eligible workers refer new registrants to the GAIN office, which is often housed at another site, for orientation and appraisal.

At orientation registrants learn about the opportunities the program can offer them, as well as about their obligation to participate. During this session each registrant and a GAIN staff member sign a general agreement or contract to signify that the major features of the program, including the registrant's rights and obligations and the county's responsibilities, have been explained. And during or after orientation, staff administer a screening test of registrants' basic reading and math skills.⁴

³Individuals who meet the following criteria are among those most commonly exempted: a parent or caretaker or a child under age 6 who is responsible for providing full-time care for the child (parent not in school); a person who works or expects to work 30 hours or more per week in regular employment that should last at least 30 days; and a person who is a parent but is not the principal wage earner, when the principal wage earner in the home is registered for GAIN.

⁴The screening test is the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) test.

FIGURE 1. 1
GAIN PARTICIPANT FLOW CHART



(continued)

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FIGURE 1.1 (continued)

NOTES: ^a Background characteristics and performance on a basic skills test determine a registrant's first activity assignment.

- o Registrants who fail the basic skills test, do not have a high school diploma or GED, or have limited English-speaking ability are required to enter basic education. These registrants have the option of completing job club or job search first but must enter basic education if they do not find a job.
- o Whether the registrant attends job club or supervised job search is determined by the registrant's employment background. Job club is intended for those who have not been employed in the past two years.
- o Registrants who have not been determined to need basic education, but who left AFDC due to employment at least twice within the past three years, are referred directly to assessment.

Registrants who complete their self-initiated activities or are no longer deferred are assigned to GAIN activities according to the criteria described above.

^b Some jobs result in leaving AFDC, some in deregistration from GAIN, and others in deferrals.

TABLE 1.1
GAIN PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Job Search Activities

Job search activities include job club, group training sessions in which participants learn basic job seeking and interviewing skills, and supervised job search, in which participants have access to telephone banks, job listings, employment counseling, and other assistance under staff supervision. These activities usually last for three weeks. After assessment, job services consists of job placement, employment counseling, and job development activities. In 90-day job search participants seek work on their own and make periodic reports to GAIN staff.

Basic Education

Basic education includes adult basic education (ABE) classes providing instruction in reading, writing and mathematics for those with low skill levels; classes to prepare for a General Educational Development (GED) certificate; and courses in English as a Second Language (ESL). Participants stay in courses until they reach a satisfactory level of skill in the subject.

Vocational Education and Training

Vocational skills training and college programs leading to employment in an occupation which is in demand in the labor market. Education programs can be pursued for up to two years, while no time limit is placed on training programs.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Participants are placed in subsidized employment where they receive training in specific job skills at the workplace. Grant diversion -- in which the recipient's grant is diverted to the employer to help subsidize the recipient's wage -- can be used to fund wages.

Pre-Employment Preparation (PREP)

PREP is unpaid work experience in a public or nonprofit agency in exchange for the recipient's welfare grant. There are two types of PREP assignments: (1) basic PREP is intended to develop general work habits and provide recipients with references for future unsubsidized employment; and (2) advanced PREP is to focus on the on-the-job enhancement of existing or recently acquired skills.

PREP assignments can be short-term, lasting up to three months, or long-term, lasting up to one year. The number of hours of the work assignment are determined by adding the recipient's grant, less any child support paid to the county, to the Food Stamp allotment, and dividing that sum by the average hourly wage. PREP work assignments cannot exceed 32 hours per week.

(continued)

TABLE 1.1 (continued)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Supported Work and Transitional Employment

Supported work is paid work experience, designed to improve the work attitudes and skills of those with a scant work history. It is characterized by close supervision at the job site, group settings, peer support, and gradual increases in work responsibilities. In contrast, transitional employment provides less intensive supervised training in a work setting and is designed for recipients with some work history.

Grant diversion must be used to partially fund these activities. The counties are not required to offer supported work and transitional employment; but if they do not, they must justify that decision to the State Department of Social Services.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Child Care

GAIN will help registrants find appropriate child care services for their children under age 12. GAIN will pay the regional market rate for these services throughout the participant's tenure with GAIN and for three additional months after a participant leaves welfare for employment. After that time, participants may be eligible to receive other state-subsidized child care for low-income persons. GAIN will provide payments to both licensed and license-exempt providers (who are usually friends or family members). Participants are to be allowed to choose from at least two child care providers.

Transportation Expenses

Participants are to be reimbursed for transportation costs for travel to and from their GAIN assignments and for transportation of their children to and from child care. Transportation costs are limited to the least costly form of public transportation, if available. Automobile mileage is reimbursed if no public transportation is available.

Ancillary Expenses

Participants may receive up to \$450 toward the costs of books, tools, fees, and other expenses necessary to complete training or any program component including employment.

Personal Counseling

Counseling may be provided to assist with personal or family problems arising from participants' adjustment to training assignments or to jobs if these problems seem to be preventing participation in the GAIN program. However, GAIN funds will only cover county efforts to identify the need for counseling and to make a referral to an appropriate provider.

Orientation is followed by an appraisal interview, often on the same day as orientation but occasionally several weeks later.⁵ At this meeting staff inform registrants of the service options available to them at that stage of the program; assign them to an initial activity or temporarily defer them from the program; and if necessary arrange for them to receive assistance with child care, transportation, or other support services. At this point registrants sign another agreement signifying their willingness to participate in the assigned activity. This contract also states that the county must provide the agreed upon activities and support services or the registrant will not be obligated to participate in GAIN. The contract is to be amended whenever registrants change activities.

After being appraised, registrants may begin one of three kinds of activities -- basic education, job search, or career assessment -- depending on their employment and welfare history, educational background, and scores on the basic skills screening test administered earlier. Those registrants who do not have a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate, who fail the screening test, or who do not speak English can choose to attend either basic education or job search as their first activity. If they choose job search but do not find employment, they are required to attend the appropriate basic education course: adult basic education (ABE), preparation for a GED certificate, or English as a Second Language. Most registrants who have a high school diploma or its equivalent and pass the educational screening test must enter job search as their first activity; however, those who have had their AFDC benefits discontinued because of employment two or more times in the past three years may move directly into career assessment, where trained assessors evaluate their needs, capabilities, and career goals and GAIN staff help them develop a plan for vocational education or training.

Registrants who, before entering GAIN, were already enrolled in a "self-initiated" education or training course -- that is, a course they began on their own that is approved by the GAIN program⁶ -- can fulfill their GAIN obligation by continuing the course, but for no more than two years. Self-initiated programs therefore represent a fourth initial path for registrants.

If a registrant in a pre-assessment job search activity receives a job offer that will pay less than his or her current income while on AFDC, a provision in the GAIN legislation allows the registrant to refuse the offer. This Net Loss of Income provision therefore protects participants from becoming financially worse off by leaving welfare to take a job.⁷ Because California offers

⁵According to the GAIN regulations, orientation is considered to be part of appraisal. However, the counties have generally treated those functions as separate steps in the intake process, although some arranged them to occur on the same day.

⁶These courses can include basic education, vocational education, or various types of training. Vocational education and training must be in preparation for occupations in demand in the local labor market.

⁷The GAIN legislation states:

(continued...)

high welfare grants, minimum-wage jobs would not meet this standard for many welfare families. (This provision does not apply after assessment has been completed.)

As mentioned above, assessments allow registrants to define, with the help of a trained assessor, their longer term employment interests. As part of the process, the assessor also administers tests of the registrant's vocational capabilities and recommends further education and training. Based on the assessment, an Employment Development Plan is written, specifying the registrant's particular employment goals, the time frame for achieving them, and an appropriate next activity assignment. Since the registrant's first activity is prescribed by GAIN rules, this assessment stage represents the first point in the program model where registrants can exercise much choice over the services they will receive. In fact, registrants who disagree with the assessor's recommendations or the program assignment can have either decision submitted to a third party for arbitration.

The training and educational services available after assessment include short-term unpaid work experience (known as Pre-Employment Preparation, or PREP) and vocational education or skills training, including on-the-job training, job services, and (except in some smaller counties) supported work and transitional employment. (Again, these are defined in Table 1.1.) Vocational education or training courses must be for an occupation that is in demand in the local labor market. Registrants who do not complete their education or training assignment or are not making satisfactory progress (as determined by the case manager and service provider) are to be placed in basic long-term PREP. Those who complete their assignment but are unable to locate unsubsidized employment are to undertake 90 days of job search services. Registrants who remain unemployed after this search are to be referred to advanced long-term PREP for up to one year. After that time, if still unsuccessful in finding a job, registrants are to be referred back to assessment. The four different categories of PREP, and their placement in the sequence of services, reflect legislative provisions designed to ensure that GAIN's workfare component would be used to improve registrants' skills and readiness for employment, and not to "make work" for or punish registrants who are failing to make much progress toward becoming self-supporting.

⁷(...continued)

Net loss of income shall be deemed to occur when current income is greater than the postemployment income would be if the job offer were accepted. "Postemployment income" means any unearned income plus the gross earnings from the job offered, less all of the following: mandatory and legal deductions from the proposed salary, the cost to the participant of health insurance premiums offered by the prospective employer or if none is offered, the cost of purchasing health insurance coverage based on the competitive market rate, child care, transportation, and other mandatory work-related expenses, and the cash equivalent value of the difference between the assistance food stamps and the nonassistance food stamps for which the participant is eligible.

The GAIN legislation mandates that participation in the various program components described above be continuous as long as the registrant remains on welfare and does not meet the program's special exemption criteria, or is not temporarily excused or deferred from participation. Registrants may be deferred for reasons of "good cause" such as part-time employment (for 15 or more hours per week), temporary illness verified by a physician, "severe family crisis," and legal difficulties. (Appendix Table A.1 further defines these reasons.) Registrants who fail, or refuse without good cause, to enter into a GAIN contract, participate in the agreed upon activity, or accept a job offer or referral are subject to a series of steps to enforce participation.

The GAIN legislation created a complex penalty process that would allow counties to enforce the participation mandate but at the same time would protect registrants against unreasonable expectations or unfair punishment. If a registrant does not carry out the program's requirements, GAIN staff are to make a "cause determination." If no good cause for nonparticipation is found, various informal and formal attempts at conciliation are made. If these efforts fail, the registrant must take part in three months of money management, an arrangement under which a third party receives and makes payments from the welfare grant.⁸ The final step, grant reductions or terminations, is to be invoked only after money management (but directly after formal conciliation for a second episode of noncompliance) or if the registrant does not keep the agreement in money management. These sanctions last three months for the first offense and six months for the second, consistent with federal WIN regulations. Recipients of AFDC Family Group benefits (that is, single parents, usually mothers) are to be sanctioned by grant reductions (loss of the mother's portion of the grant), and recipients of AFDC Unemployed Parent benefits (that is, heads of two-parent households, usually fathers), by grant terminations, also in keeping with WIN rules.

B. A Balancing of Views on Welfare Reform

The GAIN structure and provisions just described reflect California legislators' efforts to incorporate into a single program model key elements of both of the views of welfare reform that were debated. For example, to accommodate the competing interests in quick job entry versus human capital investment, the GAIN model channels registrants lacking a diploma or basic skills into an appropriate basic education program as their first activity, and includes later opportunities for vocational education and training; but it also requires that registrants who do not need basic education participate in job search activities before entering the other program components. Initial job search is one way to identify, and hasten into the labor force, those registrants who can find employment without further investment of program resources. At the

⁸Money management is only to be used upon the first instance of a mandatory registrant's noncompliance. Under the rules of the procedure, the welfare department arranges for the registrant's welfare grant to go to a substitute payee or makes direct vendor payments for a three-month period. None of the grant goes directly to the registrant; the substitute payee makes payments on behalf of the registrant.

same time, however, the legislation's Net Loss of Income provision was included to allay some legislators' fears that registrants might have to take jobs that would hurt them financially.

Additional features of the program model illustrate the legislative compromise GAIN represents. For example, to reconcile the concern for individualized services and participant choice with the concern to prescribe program sequences that are believed to serve best the broader employment goals of GAIN, the program model allows only limited flexibility at the beginning -- the choice between job search and basic education -- but considerably more opportunities for choice later at the assessment stage. Furthermore, to prevent a punitive emphasis or tone from growing out of GAIN's participation mandate and penalties, program regulations direct staff to make a concerted effort to encourage participation by noncompliant registrants before initiating any financial sanctions.

Despite the many provisions that balance the alternative views of welfare reform, and their specificity, the GAIN legislation did not resolve all the differences between the two approaches. The counties were left with considerable discretion to shape the actual character of GAIN in practice. For example, county staff can influence the degree of emphasis on quick job entry or human capital investment in several ways, such as by encouraging registrants to seek or avoid low-paying jobs, or by urging them to pursue immediate employment or to stay in the program to get more education or training. County staff can also influence the degree of individualization and choice by deciding how much effort to devote to learning about registrants' preferences and capabilities or how fully to inform them about the trade-offs accompanying the options they face. The staff can partly set the scope and tone of the participation mandate by applying stricter or more lenient interpretations of the deferral criteria, the definitions of satisfactory participation, and the definitions of "good cause" reasons for nonparticipation; by deciding how far to pursue informal efforts to elicit cooperation from recalcitrant registrants; and by how quickly they resort to official penalties. In these and other ways counties can determine GAIN's everyday focus and tone. As noted at the outset, one of the main purposes of this report is to describe some of the choices the eight counties made, within the discretion the GAIN legislation allowed.

IV. The Challenge of GAIN

GAIN stands out from its predecessors as an extremely ambitious welfare employment program, distinguished particularly by its scale, scope, and complexity. Previous initiatives generally were not statewide programs directed toward the entire WIN-mandatory welfare caseload. Given the size of the total California caseload, GAIN may eventually involve over 200,000 welfare recipients. And given the scope of activities mandated in GAIN, the program represents a substantial fiscal commitment. In short, welfare recipients in California have an unusual opportunity to receive employment-related services.

At the same time, the complexity of the program model represents an equally unprecedented challenge for the county welfare departments that must put it into practice. Most previous programs were much simpler in design. Many have offered job search and unpaid work experience, but none has had such an extensive basic education mandate. Furthermore, few have

provided the same opportunities or resources for basic education or for vocational education or skills training as those in GAIN. And although most recent initiatives have required at least short-term participation, usually in job search or unpaid work experience, few have imposed a standard as strict as GAIN's mandate that individuals participate continuously as long as they are on welfare and not officially excused from participating.

To enable the counties to provide basic education and other training opportunities along with job search and unpaid work experience, the GAIN legislation requires the welfare departments to maximize their use of existing community resources. The departments have therefore had to create and operate extensive networks of interorganizational arrangements with adult schools, community colleges, Job Training Partnership Act agencies, regional occupation programs or centers, community-based agencies, child care resource and referral agencies, and other organizations.

The potential obstacles to creating and smoothly operating these networks are many, including conflicts arising from agencies' differing goals and expectations, and differences in internal operating procedures.⁹ The challenge of overcoming these predictable obstacles is likely to be even greater in the larger counties that must assign large numbers of registrants to many different service providers. With each provider the welfare department must establish effective means of communication through which the GAIN staff can learn about registrants' participation and performance in a timely manner.

GAIN's ongoing participation requirement poses yet another set of new challenges. First, registrants may be more resistant to a longer term participation obligation than they would be to a shorter one, or may face more obstacles in meeting a longer term requirement. For example, although many registrants required to enter basic education may welcome the opportunity to further their education, others may resist it because of past difficulties in school, a desire to proceed into skills training, or simply a reluctance to be an "older" student, among other reasons. Likewise, registrants may resist long-term participation in the other GAIN activities if the offerings hold little interest for them.

Second, the continuous participation obligation means that staff must keep in touch with

⁹Weiss (1981) has characterized impediments to coordination among social service agencies as follows:

Many devices are tried, but few human service programs designed to do so ever result in more coordination.... The roots of this implementation failure lie in the ways that social service organizations deal with their clients, their staff, their sources of income, and each other. Intrinsic, deep-seated organizational processes have turned out to be formidable impediments to creating interorganizational ties.

(See also Auspos, 1985.)

registrants over a long period of time, during which many problems may arise to interfere with registrants' participation and require staff attention. Responding to individual circumstances and emphasizing registrant choice can take a great deal of staff time and resources and may be particularly difficult if individual staff caseloads are large.¹⁰

Finally, the procedures mandated for penalizing noncompliant registrants are much more complicated in GAIN than in most other mandatory welfare employment programs. GAIN's penalty process -- which progresses from informal to formal conciliation, then to money management, and finally to financial sanctions, with opportunities for fair hearings along the way -- may be so complex as to deter its use.

All told, the programmatic features of GAIN that distinguish it from previous welfare employment initiatives also present California counties with unusual implementation challenges. Another main purpose of this report, therefore, is to explore the ways in which the eight early-starting counties studied have tried to meet these challenges.

¹⁰As Lipsky (1980, p. 44) has written:

The ability of street-level bureaucrats [that is, line staff] to treat people as individuals is significantly compromised by the needs of the organization to process work quickly using the resources at its disposal. The fundamental service dilemma of street-level bureaucracies is how to provide individual responses or treatment on a mass basis.

For similar reasons, another scholar was skeptical that county welfare departments in California could achieve GAIN's objectives of individualized treatment, despite the use of a participant contract. Referring to internal staffing constraints, Handler (1988, p. 33) commented:

These understaffed, undertrained workers will be under severe pressure to process large numbers of participants -- to make assessments, to get contracts signed, to move participants through the system. It is in this environment that [the participant] contract as empowerment and [the participant] contract as moral obligation are supposed to take root. The reality is that recipients will be given a set of requirements. The only difference is that at the top of the page there will appear the word "contract" and at the bottom a place for the signature.

V. The Status of GAIN Statewide

Recognizing the ambitiousness of the program they were enacting in 1985, the legislators allowed the counties up to five years to plan for GAIN and phase in their entire mandatory caseload. In early 1988, the phase-in period was extended one year, to September 1991.

Although this report investigates the experience of eight of the first counties to start GAIN programs, planning and implementation has been under way throughout the state since the passage of the legislation. As of January 1989 programs were operating in 56 counties; but most had been in operation for less than a year, and in some counties only in one or two regions. Furthermore, as of this writing, many counties, including some of the largest, had not begun to implement GAIN at its full scale.

As noted earlier, California has made a significant commitment to the GAIN program, both in total resources and in state general funds. For example, in fiscal year 1987-88 -- before all the county programs were at least partly operational -- the GAIN budget was over \$210 million, 51 percent of which the state contributed. This amount was intended to permit "full funding" of the implementation plans prepared by counties (which in turn were subject to approval by the State Department of Social Services). However, actual 1987-88 expenditures in the counties were only slightly more than half of the funds allocated for GAIN that year.¹¹

By 1988, when most counties had launched their program, a projected shortfall in state revenues limited the increase of the new GAIN budget to \$368 million, a substantial level but one that imposed much tighter constraints on the resources available to the counties than in the prior two years. In fact, state and county policymakers became concerned that the new funding level might not be sufficient to serve the full population targeted by the legislation.¹² Thus, for

¹¹Actual 1987-88 expenditures in the counties were less than the funds allocated for GAIN that year for several reasons: delays in the start and completion dates of contracts with service providers; fewer GAIN participants than were expected; and lower expenditures on child care than were expected. This underexpenditure means that, for the period studied for this report, funding shortfalls were not a major implementation problem.

¹²While addressing expenditure and other budget issues regarding GAIN, the state legislature passed amendments to the GAIN program in Assembly Bill 1819. The legislation resulted in two key changes to the GAIN program. First, the counties' allowable phase-in period was extended from two years to three years. Second, the priority-for-services that would be given to GAIN registrants in counties that did not have enough funds to serve their entire GAIN caseloads was altered. The original legislation required that counties needing to reduce costs could do so only by temporarily excluding groups of registrants from GAIN in the following order: new applicants to the AFDC-U program; AFDC-U recipients who have been continuously on aid for less than one year; volunteers; new applicants to the AFDC-FG program; recipients to the AFDC program who have been on aid for one year or more; AFDC-FG recipients who have been on aid continuously for less than one year; AFDC-FG recipients who have been continuously on aid for less than two (continued...)

the foreseeable future, legislators, administrators, and staff will be facing a fiscal environment that may require difficult choices of how to deploy resources to operate GAIN. The experiences of the early-starting counties, which structured and operated their programs in ways that have different cost implications, may be helpful in this decisionmaking process.

VI. Overview of the Report

This report is about the experiences of eight of the first ten counties in translating the GAIN legislation into an operating program. Because GAIN is both different from and more ambitious than previous welfare employment initiatives, the state and the counties began without clear guidance on a number of basic program parameters, such as precise information on the share of the caseload that would require basic education; the level of participation that would represent successful program implementation; and the effects of various procedures and components of the GAIN model, and how they were operated, on the rate and nature of program participation.

The report addresses three basic questions about this early period: How did the counties interpret and implement the GAIN program? What was the participation rate overall and in various GAIN components? And what factors in the design of GAIN, the counties' approaches to implementation, and the behavior of welfare recipients contribute to an explanation of these participation outcomes?

In describing the experiences of the early-starting counties, the report presents a picture of substantial variation and evolution -- not only in the programmatic choices that counties made, but also in the ways they interpreted the goals and messages of GAIN to registrants. In particular, the report outlines different strategies the counties adopted to manage the program and guide participants through the sequence of GAIN components. It also points to the lessons that emerged from the trial and error of early implementation, as the counties adjusted their programs in response to their experiences and their understanding of the GAIN legislation and regulations. (The report does not directly study the effects of the administration of GAIN at the state level on county decisionmaking.)

Chapter 2 of this report sets the stage for the analysis by describing the eight study counties and how they varied in characteristics that might have affected their implementation of GAIN, such as differences in economic conditions and in the characteristics of the welfare population. The chapter describes the samples of early registrants studied and the different data sources used

¹²(...continued)

years; all participants, based on the time on aid, with participants who have been on aid the longest being the last to receive exemptions. Assembly Bill 1819 revised the order of exclusion so that all applicants are the first to be excluded followed by all volunteers except teenage parents. It continued to give first priority for services to recipients on aid the longest; but it raised to second priority teenage parents who volunteer for GAIN.

throughout the report.

Chapter 3 discusses how the counties structured their local service delivery systems to put GAIN into practice. The main topics covered are the division of responsibilities between the welfare department and other local agencies and the internal environment of the GAIN unit within the welfare department, including the emphasis line staff placed on alternative approaches to registrants' self-sufficiency, the models of case management implemented, and staff morale and attitudes about the GAIN program.

Chapters 4 and 6 cover the basic findings on program participation. Chapter 4 presents an overview of participation patterns for all registrants, highlighting the critical junctures in the program model where the actions of registrants and staff played a key role in influencing the flow of individuals through GAIN. Chapter 6 reports on participation among registrants who attended a GAIN orientation and appraisal -- the prerequisite for participation in job search, education, training, or work experience. This chapter indicates the amount of participation in different GAIN components and the extent to which there was continuity of participation by those registrants with whom staff had an opportunity to work. These two chapters thus present the operational outcomes that form the core of the report.

The remaining chapters describe the implementation of GAIN and seek to explain these participation outcomes. They suggest the extent to which nonparticipation resulted from different factors: the GAIN legislation and regulations, program policies, implementation strategies, the use of resources, and the fact that many welfare recipients became ineligible for GAIN because they left welfare or for other reasons.

Most specifically, Chapter 5 examines one of the critical junctures identified in Chapter 4: the extent to which individuals registered at the income maintenance office moved on to the GAIN office for an orientation and appraisal. The chapter explores a number of factors that facilitated or impeded registrants' participation in these sessions, which represented the GAIN staff's first chance to work with the registrants. Chapter 7 examines the orientation and appraisal process itself, showing how staff explained the opportunities and obligations registrants have under GAIN and how they tried to learn about registrants' individual interests, circumstances, and capabilities. This chapter considers some of the factors that led counties to adopt different presentation approaches and the trade-offs those entailed. It also discusses the most common reasons for deferral from the program and other aspects of the deferral process. Chapter 8 addresses ongoing case management, which begins once registrants are assigned to their initial activity. The chapter outlines the processes counties developed to monitor registrants' participation and progress, such as the communications the GAIN staff set up with service providers, case managers' interactions with registrants, and their use of GAIN's official penalty process. It also describes a number of changes instituted in some counties to strengthen the monitoring process.

Chapters 9 and 10 discuss the services offered in GAIN and some of the institutional adaptations that outside agencies made to accommodate the program. The chapters focus on basic education and job search, respectively, the services having the most participants during the

period studied. More specifically, Chapter 9 discusses how adult schools and other agencies operated basic education and also reports on the referral, participation, and exit patterns for this component among GAIN registrants who were determined to be in need of basic education. Chapter 10 outlines how the counties implemented job search services and how their different interpretations of GAIN's intent regarding quick job entry and further education and training were reflected in the operation of this component. The chapter also explores issues that have arisen in offering registrants choice and individualized services at the assessment stage of the program; and finally it briefly describes the operation of work experience (PREP) and other training activities.

CHAPTER 2

COUNTY CHARACTERISTICS, SAMPLE SELECTION AND CHARACTERISTICS, AND DATA SOURCES

This chapter outlines the characteristics of the counties studied and the GAIN registrants sampled. The differences in county and registrant characteristics across the eight counties described here will figure in the later discussions of the particular challenges each county faced in implementing GAIN. This chapter also outlines the research strategies and data sources used in this report. Three primary data sources are discussed in the last section of the chapter: (1) reviews of county GAIN office casefiles for a sample of registrants in each of the eight counties; (2) a survey instrument completed by welfare agency staff in each county; and (3) field research interviews and observations by MDRC field researchers.

I. County Characteristics

California's 58 counties vary widely in several important demographic, economic, and political conditions that may affect GAIN operations: the nature of the labor market, the characteristics of the general population, and the size and demographics of the welfare caseload. GAIN is designed to allow counties the flexibility to shape their programs to fit their local conditions, which partially explains the variation in programs across counties that will be seen throughout this report.

The analysis in this report focuses on GAIN operations in eight of the first ten counties to implement the program between July 1986 and January 1987: Butte, Fresno, Kern, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Stanislaus, and Ventura. Yuba and Madera, both very small counties, also started GAIN operations during this period but were excluded from the study. Overall, these eight counties represent 95 percent of the caseload of the early-starting counties. The report studies the first 16 to 24 months of operations through an examination of at least six months of participation data for a sample of registrants enrolling in late 1986 and early 1987 and through presentations of field research and survey data covering operations through May 1988.

The eight counties represent diverse geographic regions of the state and a mix of both urban and rural counties. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, Fresno, Kern, and Stanislaus are located in the central valley, a region dominated by agriculture. Butte and Napa are northern, rural counties; however, Butte is farther removed from a major metropolitan area than Napa. Santa Clara and San Mateo are urban counties located in the San Francisco vicinity. Ventura is a southern coastal county near Los Angeles.

Table 2.1 presents data on several economic and demographic characteristics for the 58

FIGURE 2.1
MAP OF CALIFORNIA SHOWING THE EIGHT STUDY COUNTIES



TABLE 2.1

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF CALIFORNIA COUNTIES

County	Population (1988)	AFDC Caseload (6/88)		Percent of AFDC Caseload (1987) That is:				Unem- ployment Rate ^d (7/88)	Percent of County Employed in (1985):		Percent of County (1980): ^e				
		Size	Percent of State	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian		Agri- culture	Manufac- turing	Living in Poverty	Living in Rural Areas	Having a High School Diploma	Not Using English as a Primary Language	
Southern:															
Los Angeles	8,555,900	200,714	32.7	17.7	40.5	34.3	6.9	5.6	0.3	23.3	13.4	1.1	69.8	31.4	
San Diego	2,327,700	44,555	7.3	42.0	26.2	21.7	8.4	4.9	1.5	15.3	11.3	6.8	78.0	18.1	
Orange	2,238,700	17,208	2.8	39.5	23.4	4.5	32.2	3.5	0.9	24.1	7.3	0.3	80.4	17.8	
San Bernardino	1,240,000	38,686	6.3	56.3	25.8	14.8	2.0	5.8	4.2	12.3	11.1	9.9	71.0	16.1	
Riverside	946,100	20,386	3.3	57.8	26.8	11.9	2.5	8.5	4.2	11.1	11.3	17.5	68.9	17.9	
Ventura	637,400	7,284	1.2	44.8	44.4	7.5	2.4	6.6	7.1	14.3	8.0	5.4	75.9	21.0	
Imperial	111,100	4,064	0.7	19.1	75.2	4.4	0.1	27.2	31.2	3.7	15.3	30.0	50.9	50.9	
Central:															
Santa Clara	1,431,600	20,997	3.4	28.3	38.7	10.2	21.5	4.4	0.6	36.7	7.1	2.3	79.5	21.2	
Alameda	1,241,600	28,278	4.6	21.5	9.2	59.9	8.2	5.2	0.5	13.9	11.3	1.1	76.0	17.3	
Sacramento	961,900	33,199	5.4	51.8	12.9	22.7	11.0	5.8	0.7	6.2	11.2	4.0	78.0	12.2	
San Francisco	741,300	11,566	1.9	14.0	12.1	48.8	22.9	5.1	0.1	7.5	13.7	0.0	74.0	35.9	
Contra Costa	753,500	12,888	2.1	43.8	10.0	41.0	4.4	5.2	0.4	11.8	7.6	4.0	81.7	11.7	
San Mateo	627,500	4,109	0.7	33.9	19.4	39.3	4.7	3.2	1.1	11.6	6.1	1.8	81.6	22.4	
Fresno	606,000	29,902	4.9	27.2	47.0	13.9	11.1	10.3	21.7	8.8	14.5	21.7	63.7	27.7	
Kern	511,400	14,242	2.3	49.9	32.3	16.1	0.6	9.7	14.7	5.8	12.6	18.0	62.1	26.0	
San Joaquin	451,400	18,355	3.0	32.6	23.3	12.1	30.7	10.2	11.3	14.6	13.3	17.6	62.6	21.1	
Santa Barbara	345,000	4,103	0.7	43.1	44.4	7.9	3.3	4.5	5.8	15.9	10.6	9.0	79.1	18.6	
Monterey	346,100	5,197	0.8	30.4	50.2	11.6	5.7	7.1	19.9	7.4	11.4	22.5	71.0	29.5	
Stanislaus	333,200	11,310	1.8	67.2	19.3	3.4	9.5	12.3	12.0	19.0	11.9	19.0	62.0	18.0	
Tulare	294,900	12,372	2.0	43.0	47.0	4.0	5.0	11.1	27.9	11.5	16.5	37.7	55.8	28.4	
Solano	303,500	6,151	1.0	52.6	8.4	33.1	4.0	6.5	1.4	7.4	9.4	5.8	76.8	14.0	
Marin	228,400	1,250	0.2	64.0	5.0	19.8	10.0	3.3	0.6	6.9	7.0	6.6	89.9	11.4	
Santa Cruz	225,400	2,792	0.5	65.5	29.1	3.2	1.1	6.3	8.8	16.0	12.2	18.7	77.8	16.6	

(continued)

TABLE 2.1 (continued)

County	Population (1988) ^a	AFDC Caseload (6/88)		Percent of AFDC Caseload (1987) That is: ^c				Unem- ployment Rate ^d (7/88)	Percent of County Employed in (1985):		Percent of County (1980): ^e			
		Size	Percent of State	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian		Agri- culture	Manufac- turing	Living in Poverty Areas	Living in a Rural School District	Having a High Diploma	Not Using English as a Primary Language
Central (cont.):														
San Luis Obispo	204,300	2,200	0.4	77.2	17.5	3.7	0.7	4.5	3.2	7.6	13.7	24.2	76.8	10.0
Merced	168,600	7,028	1.1	39.5	33.6	10.2	15.9	10.5	20.6	18.8	14.7	37.7	60.4	26.5
Kings	92,000	2,985	0.5	37.2	46.8	13.2	0.7	9.6	23.0	14.0	14.6	33.6	58.7	27.1
Madera	81,600	2,541	0.4	46.2	44.3	7.1	0.8	11.7	31.6	14.5	15.7	52.3	60.1	25.7
Tuolumne	45,000	927	0.2	93.5	3.7	0.2	0.2	7.1	0.7	6.3	11.9	90.9	77.3	4.7
San Benito	34,100	772	0.1	29.3	69.3	0.7	0.4	11.4	28.7	19.2	13.0	54.1	56.5	39.3
Calaveras	30,300	696	0.1	93.1	2.3	0.7	0.1	8.9	1.7	3.3	10.1	100.0	76.3	5.3
Amador	27,150	338	0.1	93.1	2.5	0.0	0.0	6.5	1.6	21.3	9.0	100.0	76.8	4.9
Inyo	18,100	374	0.1	63.6	7.9	0.5	0.0	4.6	1.2	6.2	10.2	81.4	74.2	8.3
Mariposa	14,300	352	0.1	94.4	1.9	0.3	0.0	4.5	2.4	4.9	11.5	100.0	73.7	4.9
Mono	9,350	85	0.0	61.1	3.3	1.1	6.7	5.6	2.4	7.1	11.2	54.2	88.2	7.6
Northern:														
Sonoma	360,300	5,159	0.8	76.3	9.6	4.1	5.9	5.0	3.8	15.3	9.5	34.1	77.6	9.3
Butte	172,600	5,502	0.9	88.5	4.2	2.8	2.5	8.3	6.4	9.3	15.0	29.3	71.6	6.8
Placer	151,800	2,284	0.4	90.2	7.0	0.4	0.6	5.4	1.3	12.5	8.6	49.5	77.4	7.8
Shasta	137,000	5,108	0.8	90.3	1.8	1.8	2.6	9.3	3.5	11.4	10.9	45.4	75.6	4.0
Yolo	133,500	3,211	0.5	62.6	26.0	5.6	3.9	5.7	10.2	11.1	15.9	18.0	73.5	18.7
Humboldt	114,900	3,989	0.7	85.3	1.2	1.1	3.3	7.4	2.0	14.7	14.3	43.6	76.4	5.7
El Dorado	116,700	1,862	0.3	87.1	7.3	1.9	0.7	5.0	1.2	6.2	8.7	57.5	81.2	6.8
Napa	105,800	1,249	0.2	81.6	15.4	1.7	0.6	5.3	5.9	12.0	8.1	19.3	75.4	11.3
Mendocino	75,600	2,457	0.4	84.3	3.6	1.3	0.5	7.8	5.6	19.7	12.3	68.4	76.4	7.6
Nevada	75,300	1,020	0.2	95.3	2.4	0.3	0.3	6.2	0.6	14.1	8.7	87.0	82.0	4.9
Sutter	60,900	1,760	0.3	75.0	17.1	2.4	3.8	10.5	16.1	9.2	11.3	32.9	67.7	16.7
Yuba	56,600	2,925	0.5	78.4	6.2	4.7	8.9	11.6	15.7	9.2	16.1	28.7	43.8	10.6
Lake	51,400	1,916	0.3	75.8	6.7	6.0	0.3	9.9	8.0	3.0	13.3	76.2	66.4	6.8
Tehama	46,750	1,593	0.3	91.7	5.5	0.4	0.2	10.0	9.2	22.7	12.9	63.3	69.5	5.4
Siskiyou	43,250	1,384	0.2	91.8	3.4	2.6	1.8	10.0	7.8	11.6	12.1	70.7	75.6	7.3
Lassen	26,450	747	0.1	94.3	0.6	1.9	0.0	6.5	4.2	8.5	10.3	69.9	73.1	6.3

(continued)

TABLE 2.1 (continued)

County	Population (1988) ^a	AFDC Caseload (6/88) ^b		Percent of AFDC Caseload (1987) That is:				Unem- ployment Rate ^d (7/88)	Percent of County Employed in (1985):		Percent of County (1980): ^e			
		Size	Percent of State	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian		Agri- culture	Manufac- turing	Not Using			
											Living in Poverty	Having in Rural Areas	English a High School Diploma	as a Primary Language
Northern(cont.):														
Glenn	23,200	662	0.1	88.0	8.4	0.3	0.6	13.1	24.7	14.8	13.1	59.0	63.0	13.2
Plumas	19,950	427	0.1	91.3	2.6	1.4	0.0	8.2	1.7	18.3	9.7	74.3	78.4	5.5
Del Norte	19,750	1,033	0.2	83.2	1.2	0.3	3.4	11.5	7.7	21.2	12.7	67.5	67.1	9.4
Colusa	14,950	362	0.1	64.8	29.4	0.8	1.1	7.5	37.3	6.8	10.7	68.1	64.6	19.2
Trinity	13,900	400	0.1	87.2	4.3	0.3	0.5	8.1	0.8	16.0	11.4	76.8	74.5	2.4
Modoc	9,250	283	0.0	79.8	9.2	0.0	0.3	8.5	14.3	7.1	14.5	64.9	72.3	5.4
Sierra	3,520	60	0.0	93.8	2.5	1.2	0.0	6.4	*	*	12.9	100.0	78.1	7.1
Alpine	1,210	47	0.0	20.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.4	*	*	18.8	100.0	86.1	12.0

SOURCE AND NOTES: A star indicates that data are not available.

^a Population numbers are from the California Department of Finance.

^b Caseload numbers are from the California Department of Social Services, Statistical Services Department.

^c Ethnicity calculations of the AFDC caseload are from the California Department of Finance.

^d Percent of county employed in agriculture and manufacturing (calculated as a percent of employed individuals) and unemployment rate are from the California Employment Development Department.

^e Percent of county population living in poverty, living in rural areas, having a high school diploma, and not using English as a primary language are from the 1980 Census.

counties; statistics on the eight counties studied here are underscored. The eight include both counties such as Napa with a relatively small number of recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and ones with a relatively large caseload, such as Santa Clara and Fresno. The remaining study counties have medium-sized caseloads. The report does not cover the four counties with the largest caseloads; most notable among these is Los Angeles with approximately one-third of the AFDC recipients in the state. Overall, the eight counties studied represented 15 percent of the state's AFDC caseload as of the end of the study period. Although these counties are broadly representative of the state across a number of characteristics, they overrepresent rural and agricultural counties with medium-sized AFDC caseloads. Caution should therefore be used in generalizing these findings to the other areas of the state.

The scale of the GAIN programs instituted by the time of the study also differed substantially across the counties studied, as illustrated by Table 2.2. As of December 1987 Napa and San Mateo had the smallest GAIN programs, each with fewer than 1,000 registrants. Napa had the highest proportion of volunteer registrants. Butte, Ventura, Kern, and Stanislaus, had medium-sized programs, with approximately 2,500 registrants. Santa Clara and Fresno had programs that were at least five times this large. Because of the expected importance of this factor, all the tables that appear in the text list counties according to the size of their GAIN program.

The nature of the economy of each county can also be expected to affect the challenges facing the county's GAIN program in helping registrants become self-supporting. The urban counties, San Mateo and Santa Clara, and the suburban counties, Napa and Ventura, have strong economies. Primarily offering service and manufacturing jobs, these areas have unemployment rates ranging between 3 percent and 7 percent. The agricultural counties in the central valley, Fresno, Kern, and Stanislaus, have more depressed economies, with unemployment rates of 10 percent to 12 percent. Butte has a mixed service and agricultural economy, with unemployment tallied at 8 percent.

II. Sample Selection and Characteristics

To trace the experiences of registrants through the program, MDRC collected program activity data on a random sample of the GAIN registrants in each of the counties. This section examines the selection of registrants for the subsamples and discusses the demographic characteristics of the sample.

A. Sample Selection Criteria

A key analysis in this report is the examination of participation patterns among both mandatory and voluntary GAIN registrants. As discussed in Chapter 1, a portion of the AFDC caseload must participate in GAIN, whereas another portion, primarily AFDC-FG (Family Group) recipients with children under age 6, is exempt from the participation requirement. (Other criteria that exempt individuals from GAIN are listed in Appendix Table A.1.) Exempt recipients can, however, volunteer for the program.

TABLE 2.2

TOTAL NUMBER AND PERCENT OF GAIN REGISTRANTS,
BY ASSISTANCE CATEGORY, REGISTRANT STATUS, AND COUNTY

County	Total Registrants, December 1987	Mandatory AFDC-FG	Voluntary AFDC-FG	Mandatory AFDC-U
Napa	419	36%	48%	15%
San Mateo	890	66	18	16
Butte	2,285	51	12	36
Ventura	2,293	66	4	29
Kern	2,597	70	8	21
Stanislaus	2,620	48	11	41
Santa Clara	12,736	63	13	24
Fresno	14,786	47	9	45
Total	38,626	56	11	27

SOURCE: GAIN Monthly Activity Reports, December 1987.

NOTES: Some percentage distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

During the early period of GAIN operations, the counties had not yet developed automated GAIN management information systems that could have reliably provided the types of data needed for this study. MDRC staff therefore manually reviewed the casefiles of only a sample of registrants in each of the eight counties.

To guard against studying an atypical period of program operations, MDRC originally planned to exclude from the sample persons who registered for GAIN during at least the first two months of operations in each county. In fact, the sampling was delayed for a longer period in counties where staff indicated their program was experiencing difficulties in stabilizing the operations. The study sample ultimately included persons who registered for GAIN at some point between December 1986 and June 1987. Depending on the county program, this period represents between a two- and six-month lapse between the program's start-up and the registration of the first sample member, as shown in Figure 2.2 and Table 2.3.

The different sample enrollment periods for each county may have several implications for this study. On the one hand, some counties, such as Fresno and Santa Clara, had relatively more experience in operating GAIN before their samples were drawn. On the other hand, these programs may have been serving a greater proportion of their eligible caseload than programs elsewhere, which may have put strains on staff and other resources.

To identify the full county caseload for sampling, MDRC obtained a comprehensive list of GAIN registrants in all but one county.¹ Random samples of approximately 150 mandatory AFDC-FG registrants and 150 AFDC-U (Unemployed Parent) registrants in each county were selected from the names on these lists. In addition, samples of approximately 100 AFDC-FG (GAIN-exempt) voluntary registrants were selected from Napa, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Ventura.

Although MDRC intended to have equal samples from each of the counties, various factors caused the final sample sizes to fluctuate slightly. (See Table 2.4.) In some counties there simply was an insufficient number of individuals registering for GAIN during the sample enrollment period. For example, in Napa only 86 AFDC-FG mandatory registrants enrolled during that time. Data collectors also had varying success in locating registrants' casefiles across counties. Overall, for the sample selected the percentage of files found ranged from 90 percent

¹Stanislaus did not have records listing all persons who had registered during March and April 1987. The most comprehensive list available for those two months consisted of a log of registrants who had signed up for orientation appointments. Thus, the individuals who registered during March and April but did not make an orientation appointment are not included in the Stanislaus "registrant" sample. As shown in Table 2.3, proxies were used for registration in Kern, San Mateo, and Santa Clara. When MDRC researchers reviewed the casefiles of the sample members to obtain participation data, they discovered that some registration dates were actually before or after the sample enrollment periods, but only for a small proportion of the registrants in these counties.

FIGURE 2.2

ENROLLMENT AND FOLLOW-UP PERIODS FOR THE PARTICIPANT FLOW SAMPLE
AND DATES OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE STAFF ACTIVITIES AND ATTITUDES SURVEY

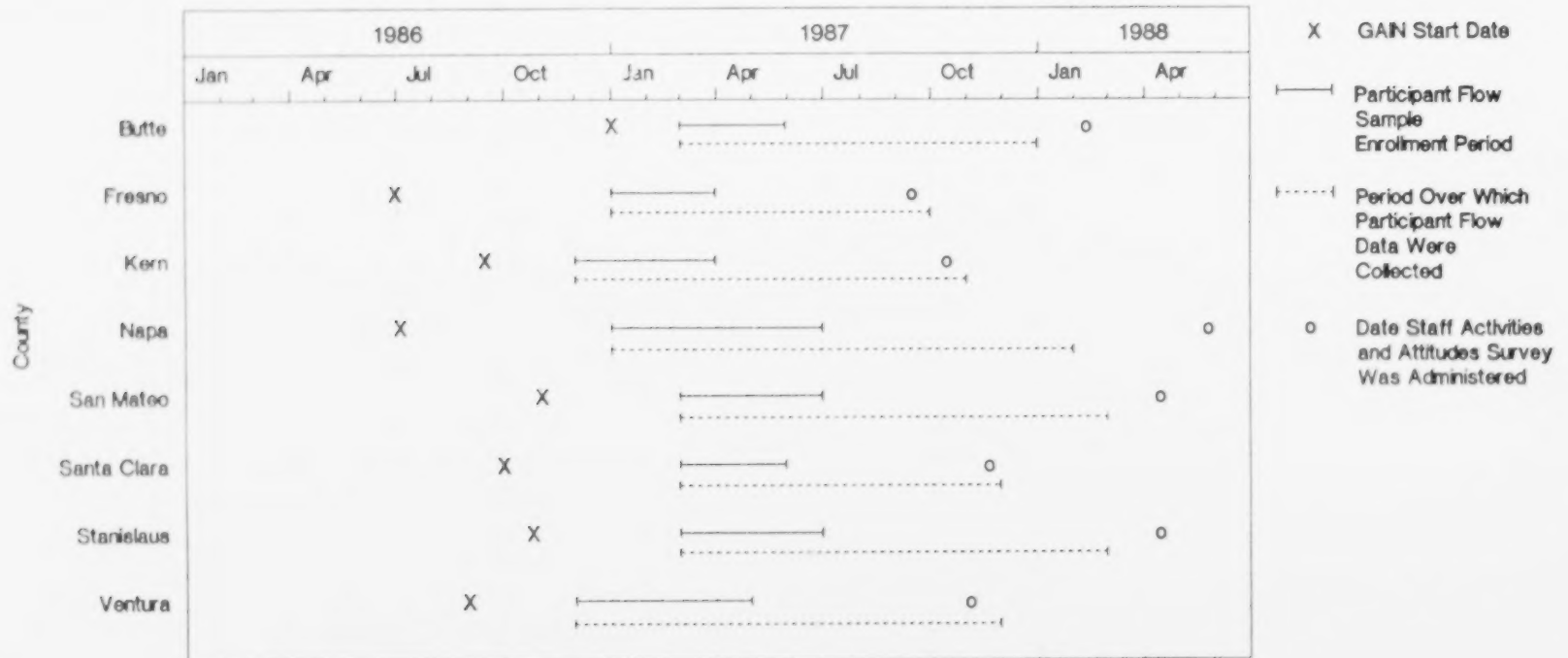


TABLE 2.3
PARTICIPANT FLOW SAMPLE SUMMARY

County	GAIN Start Date	Sample Enrollment Period	Number of Months Between GAIN Start Date and Sample Enrollment Period	Groups Referred to GAIN during Sample Enrollment Period					Proportion of All Mandatory GAIN Registrants Phased into GAIN Each Sample Enrollment Month	Sample Selection Criteria	Whether Volunteers were included in the Sample
				Un-approved Appli- cants ^a	Approved Appli- cants ^a	Rede- termined Recip- ients ^b	Renewed Recip- ients ^c	Other			
Butte	1/2/87	3/1/87 - 5/30/87	2	x	x	x	x	Only those recipients who were self-initiated were referred.	All applicants; Only self-initiated redetermined and renewed recipients. This is an unknown proportion of all recipients.	All individuals with a registration date during sample enrollment period.	No
Fresno	6/30/86	1/1/87 - 3/31/87	6	x	x	x	x		All applicants; All redetermined recipients; Around 1/15 of renewed recipients	All individuals with a registration date during sample enrollment period.	No
Kern	9/15/86	12/1/86 - 3/31/87	2 1/2	x	x	x	x		All applicants; 1/5 of redetermined recipients; 1/24 of renewed recipients	All individuals with a pre-orientation appointment date during the sample enrollment period. All registrants were given such an appointment.	No

(continued)

TABLE 2.3 (continued)

County	GAIN Start Date	Sample Enrollment Period	Number of Months between GAIN Start Date and Sample Enrollment Period	Groups Referred to GAIN during Sample Enrollment Period					Proportion of All Mandatory GAIN Registrants Phased into GAIN Each Sample Enrollment Month	Sample Selection Criteria	Whether Volunteers are included in the Sample
				Un-approved Applicants ^a	Approved Applicants ^a	Redetermined Recipients ^b	Renewed Recipients ^c	Other			
Napa	7/1/86	1/1/87-6/30/87	5 1/2	x	x	x	x	Clients with 3 or more children and 16 to 17 year-old school dropouts were referred as volunteers	All applicants; All redetermined recipients; Around 1/18 of renewed recipients	All individuals with a registration date during the sample enrollment period.	Yes
San Mateo	11/3/86	3/1/87-6/30/87	4		x	x	x		All applicants; All redetermined recipients; 1/12 of renewed recipients, although many volunteered to register before required to do so	All individuals with a program entry date during the sample enrollment period. All registrants should have a program entry date.	Yes
Santa Clara	10/1/86	3/1/87-5/30/87	6		x	x	x		All applicants; All redetermined recipients; 1/12 of renewed recipients	All individuals with a case manager assignment date, or a code indicating that no worker was available, during the sample enrollment period. This should include all registrants.	Yes

(continued)

TABLE 2.3 (continued)

County	GAIN Start Date	Sample Enrollment Period	Number of Months Between GAIN Start Date and Sample Enrollment Period	Groups Referred to GAIN during Sample Enrollment Period					Proportion of All Mandatory GAIN Registrants Phased into GAIN Each Sample Enrollment Month	Sample Selection Criteria	Whether Volunteers are included in the Sample
				Un-approved Appli-cants ^a	Approved Appli-cants ^a	Rede-termined Recip-ients ^b	Renewed Recip-ients ^c	Other			
Stanislaus	10/26/86	3/1/87-6/30/87	4	x	x	x	x		All applicants; All redetermined recipients; Around 1/24 of renewed recipients	All individuals who signed up for an orientation appointment in March or April 1987, and all those with a registration date in May or June 1987.	No
Ventura	9/1/86	12/1/86-4/31/87	3	x	x	x	x		All applicants; All redetermined recipients; 1/12 of renewed recipients	All individuals with a registration date during the sample enrollment period.	Yes

NOTES: ^a Applicants are those individuals who applied for welfare.

^b Redetermined recipients are welfare recipients who recently became GAIN-mandatory, generally because their youngest child had turned six years old.

^c Renewed recipients are welfare recipients who were identified as GAIN-mandatory at the time of their annual welfare eligibility review.

TABLE 2.4

PARTICIPANT FLOW FOLLOW-UP PERIODS AND SAMPLE SIZES

County	Last Date of Data Collection	Range of Months in Follow-Up Period ^a	Total Number of Registrants During Sample Enrollment Period			Percent of Registrants Sampled			Sample Sizes		
			Mandatory AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	Voluntary AFDC-FG ^b	Mandatory AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	Voluntary AFDC-FG ^b	Mandatory AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	Voluntary AFDC-FG ^b
Butte	12/31/87	7-10	531	307	N/A	26.9	50.2	N/A	143	154	N/A
Fresno	9/30/87	6-9	1423	1112	N/A	10.1	13.5	N/A	144	150	N/A
Kern	10/31/87	7-11	859	765	N/A	17.2	19.5	N/A	148	149	N/A
Napa	1/31/88	7-13	86	50	141	100.0	100.0	100.0	86	50	141
San Mateo	2/29/88	8-12	319	84	108	49.2	90.5	100.0	157	76	108
Santa Clara	11/30/87	6-9	1754	1088	624	8.0	12.0	14.6	141	131	91
Stanislaus	2/29/88	8-12	611	602	N/A	23.4	25.1	N/A	143	151	N/A
Ventura	11/30/87	7-12	986	475	142	15.0	26.7	62.7	148	127	89
All Counties			6569	4483	1015	16.9	22.0	42.2	1110	988	429

NOTES: ^a The first month of the follow-up period does not include the month in which an individual initially registered.

^b Only volunteers in Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Ventura were used in the research.

to 100 percent. The total study sample comprises 1,110 AFDC-FG mandatory registrants, 988 AFDC-U registrants, and 429 AFDC-FG voluntary registrants.

Throughout the report, some tables reporting results from this participant flow analysis present unweighted totals for the counties included in the given analysis. This statistic gives each county equal weight in the total calculated; that is, a sample member in Santa Clara is given equal weight to one in Napa.² In most tables, the totals are weighted to reflect the size of the GAIN caseload in each county. For example, during the study period the GAIN program in Santa Clara was roughly 30 times as large as the one in Napa; thus, a sample member from Santa Clara is given more weight than one from Napa.³ Weighted or unweighted participation data are of interest depending on the research question. Because the study sample for the report represents almost all the early-starting counties, it is the weighted total that provides a good measure of what was happening across the state during this period.

²The unweighted totals are actually weighted to adjust for the slight fluctuation in sample sizes across counties. The weightings were as follows (rounded to five decimal places):

	<u>AFDC-FG Mandatory</u>	<u>AFDC-U Mandatory</u>	<u>AFDC-FG Voluntary</u>
Napa	1.74419	3.00000	0.70922
San Mateo	0.95541	1.97368	0.92593
Butte	1.04895	0.97403	N/A
Ventura	1.01351	1.18110	1.12360
Kern	1.01351	1.00671	N/A
Stanislaus	1.04895	0.99338	N/A
Santa Clara	1.06383	1.14504	1.09890
Fresno	1.04167	1.00000	N/A

³When weighting to reflect county GAIN caseload size, the weightings were as follows (rounded to five decimal places):

	<u>AFDC-FG Mandatory</u>	<u>AFDC-U Mandatory</u>	<u>AFDC-FG Voluntary</u>
Napa	0.09764	0.12650	0.24849
San Mateo	0.29757	0.20972	0.36583
Butte	0.72510	0.50434	N/A
Ventura	0.78056	0.56774	0.47575
Kern	0.85003	0.97419	N/A
Stanislaus	0.62576	0.75647	N/A
Santa Clara	2.42914	2.10119	3.40782
Fresno	1.92968	1.87552	N/A

B. The Composition of the Sample

The composition of the sample for each county varied depending on the county's rule for phasing its caseload into GAIN. GAIN regulations originally allowed counties up to two years to phase their existing caseloads into GAIN and gave counties considerable discretion in deciding which AFDC recipients would enter the program first.⁴

As shown in Table 2.3, all the counties included in the analysis were referring AFDC applicants, redetermined recipients, and renewed recipients to GAIN during the sample enrollment period. Applicants were those individuals who had applied for welfare and were determined to be GAIN-mandatory. Redetermined recipients were AFDC recipients who had recently become GAIN-mandatory, generally because their youngest child had turned 6 years old. Renewed recipients were those recipients who had been identified as GAIN-mandatory -- (these recipients had been previously registered for the Work Incentive Program (WIN)) -- at the time of their annual welfare eligibility review.

As shown in the sixth column of Table 2.3, the proportion of GAIN-mandatory registrants who were brought into the program during the sample enrollment period varied across counties. For example, Kern's phase-in plan extended over approximately two years, whereas Santa Clara's plan was one year. A difference such as this indicates that the staff with the shorter phase-in period (in Santa Clara) were working with a higher proportion of the county's total GAIN population during the sample enrollment period than the staff in the county with the longer phase-in (Kern). Indeed, differences in these proportions may result in varying strains on GAIN program resources across counties.

Some counties gave priority to phasing certain groups into the program faster than others. For example, counties had a different mix of applicants and recipients enrolling in the program (Table 2.3). The registrant samples in two counties -- San Mateo and Santa Clara -- do not include individuals who were not currently receiving AFDC. In these counties applicants were referred to GAIN only if their grant applications had been approved. As another example, Butte's registrant sample consists of a high proportion of individuals who were in a self-initiated activity as of their registration. Thus, each county was working with different segments of the eligible welfare population during the study period.

None of the county GAIN programs had completed phasing in their entire eligible caseload during the sampling period. Thus, none had reached their maximum registrant caseload or the entire range of the eligible welfare population.

⁴Pursuant to AB1819, GAIN regulations issued in 1988 extended the phase-in period from two to three years.

III. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

This section describes the demographic characteristics of the two main samples of GAIN registrants examined in this report: (1) the full sample of GAIN registrants; and (2) a subsample of those who attended a GAIN orientation within two months of their registration (611 AFDC-FG mandatory registrants, 541 AFDC-U registrants, and 276 voluntary registrants). The overall participation rates of the full sample are the subject of Chapter 4, whereas the rates of those who attended an orientation form the subject of Chapter 6.

A. Characteristics of GAIN Registrants

As indicated in Table 2.5, mandatory AFDC-FG registrants in the full sample were typically women who were single parents. Almost one-third of the AFDC-FG registrants were white, and over a fifth were Hispanic. About one-tenth of the AFDC-FG registrants had limited ability to speak English. The AFDC-FG registrants sampled tended to be recipients of AFDC as opposed to applicants for it.⁵

In contrast, the AFDC-U mandatory sample was composed primarily of men in two-parent households. Indochinese were more common among the AFDC-U registrants than among the AFDC-FG registrants. In addition, a higher percentage of the AFDC-U registrants, almost one-fifth, had limited ability to speak English. Although a majority of AFDC-U registrants were welfare recipients, a slightly higher percentage of these registrants were applicants than was the case with the AFDC-FG registrants.

The sample of voluntary registrants, selected from only four of the counties, consisted almost entirely of AFDC-FG registrants, although it contained a few AFDC-U registrants, who probably were wives included as part of their husband's AFDC-U case.⁶ The typical volunteer was a single mother. AFDC-FG volunteers were more likely than mandatory registrants to be welfare recipients, as opposed to applicants, and relatively fewer had limited English-speaking ability.

B. Characteristics of Registrants Who Attended an Orientation

Table 2.6, which focuses on those registrants who attended a GAIN orientation within two months of their registration, presents a more comprehensive set of demographic characteristics

⁵Welfare department staff recorded demographic information at different points in the program model in each county. In Santa Clara, for example, most registrant characteristics were not recorded until the individual attended a group orientation. Thus, demographic information for Santa Clara registrants who did not attend orientation is generally not available. In addition, information on some demographic characteristics is not available for Fresno registrants, regardless of whether they attended a program orientation, because ADRC did not do casefile searches in that county and automated data were not complete.

⁶No separate analyses were conducted for AFDC-U volunteers because they were an extremely small group.

TABLE 2.5
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF REGISTRANTS,
BY GAIN STATUS AND ASSISTANCE CATEGORY

Characteristic	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Sex (%)			
Male	10.7	62.7	1.3
Female	63.3	5.6	97.9
Not Available ^a	25.9	31.7	0.8
Family Status (%)			
Single Parent	68.8	1.7	66.3
Parent in Two-Parent Household	8.2	62.2	2.2
Dependent Child	7.1	25.7	0.1
Caretaker Relative	2.6	0.4	0.0
Not Available ^a	13.2	10.0	31.3
Age (%)			
Less than 19	4.1	0.8	4.9
19-24	5.4	7.7	48.8
25-34	25.5	23.2	35.3
35-44	19.0	15.3	8.4
45 or Older	8.4	8.5	0.2
Not Available ^a	37.7	44.6	2.2
Average Age (Years) ^b	33.45	32.67	26.59
Ethnicity (%)			
White, Non-Hispanic	31.5	26.3	36.0
Black, Non-Hispanic	5.6	3.7	12.7
Hispanic	22.3	18.3	32.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.9	0.7	0.1
Indochinese	6.5	15.2	1.6
Other Asian	1.5	1.7	2.0
Not Available ^a	31.7	34.1	15.2
Primary Language (%)			
English	55.3	42.7	89.0
Spanish	5.5	6.8	2.0
Chinese	0.1	1.0	0.0
Laotian	0.3	0.4	0.0
Vietnamese	5.7	11.9	0.8
Other	1.3	4.1	3.2
Not Available ^a	31.9	33.2	5.0

(continued)

TABLE 2.5 (continued)

Characteristic	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Registrants with Limited English (%)			
Yes	8.6	18.8	4.9
No	54.7	43.2	87.2
Not Available ^a	36.8	38.0	7.8
AFDC Status (%)			
Applicant	26.2	31.5	20.8
Recipient	47.9	38.7	76.1
Not Available ^a	25.9	29.9	3.1
Length of Time on Own AFDC Case (%)			
Never	13.6	20.1	5.7
Two Years or Less	25.0	24.3	32.1
More than Two Years	42.3	35.0	27.1
Not Available ^a	19.1	20.6	35.1
Employed in Prior 24 Months (%)			
Yes	32.2	39.2	34.3
No	26.2	18.7	29.8
Not Available ^a	41.7	42.1	35.9
Sample Size	1110	988	429

SOURCE: MDRC's participant flow sample.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

All percentage calculations are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row. Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

^a "Not Available" refers to information not available for the registrant because the information was missing for the individual, this item was not requested by county staff, or the individual did not reach the stage of the program model where the information was collected.

^b All averages are calculated for only those registrants who have a valid datum for that item.

TABLE 2.6

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY GAIN STATUS AND ASSISTANCE CATEGORY

Characteristic	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Sex (%)			
Male	13.9	91.6	2.4
Female	86.1	8.3	97.6
Not Available ^a	0.0	0.1	0.0
Family Status (%)			
Single Parent	82.6	1.2	92.7
Parent in Two-Parent Household	10.6	96.6	4.1
Dependent Child	3.0	0.2	0.0
Caretaker Relative	2.0	0.5	0.0
Not Available	1.7	1.5	3.2
Age (%)			
Less than 19	3.0	0.4	6.0
19-24	5.6	8.7	45.7
25-34	34.2	33.2	40.0
35-44	25.7	20.5	7.9
45 or Older	10.3	9.1	0.4
Not Available ^a	21.2	28.1	0.0
Average Age (Years) ^b	34.13	34.24	25.70
Any Children (%) ^c			
Less Than 6 Years	14.6	68.3	92.8
Between 6 and 11 Years	57.0	44.9	25.0
Between 12 and 18 Years	50.0	24.1	11.3
19 or Older	2.6	1.2	0.2
Not Available ^a	2.4	2.5	1.6
Ethnicity (%)			
White	49.9	42.9	41.4
Hispanic	31.8	30.0	39.9
Black	7.1	6.2	12.7
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.3	0.8	0.2
Indochinese	7.0	15.8	1.6
Other Asian	1.2	2.6	4.0
Not Available ^a	1.7	1.7	0.2
Primary Language (%)			
English	81.9	69.9	96.6
Spanish	8.8	10.9	1.5
Chinese	0.2	1.4	0.0
Laotian	0.6	0.8	0.0
Vietnamese	6.3	10.6	0.0
Other	0.9	5.4	1.6
Not Available ^a	1.4	1.0	0.3

(continued)

TABLE 2.6 (continued)

Characteristic	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Registrants with Limited English (%)			
Yes	13.0	24.1	3.5
No	84.5	74.6	95.4
Not Available ^a	2.5	1.3	1.1
High School Diploma or GED Received (%)			
Yes	38.0	35.9	45.7
No	52.1	54.0	37.3
Not Available ^a	10.0	10.1	17.0
Average Highest Grade Completed ^b	10.36	10.09	11.18
Registrants Who Scored Below 215 on Either Basic Skills Test (%)	30.7	26.7	25.2
Range of Score on Basic Skills Reading Test (%)			
214 or Below	7.6	8.6	1.4
215 or Above	62.9	58.2	71.4
Not Available ^a	29.6	33.2	27.2
Range of Score on Basic Skills Math Test (%)			
214 or Below	30.7	24.4	25.2
215 or Above	39.8	42.3	47.6
Not Available ^a	29.6	33.3	27.2
Determined to be in Need of Basic Education (%)	58.4	62.7	N/A
High School Diploma Received and Scored 214 or Below on Basic Skills Math or Reading Test	5.5	7.1	N/A
No High School Diploma Received and Scored 214 or Below on Basic Skills Math or Reading Test	18.9	15.9	N/A
No High School Diploma Received and Scored 215 or Above on Basic Skills Tests	14.8	14.2	N/A
High School Diploma Received and Had Limited English Ability	1.2	1.0	N/A
No High School Diploma Received and Had Limited English Ability	8.5	16.3	N/A
High School Diploma, Basic Skills Test Scores, or English Speaking Information Not Available, or Referred to Basic Education for Unknown Reason	9.5	8.2	N/A

(continued)

TABLE 2.6 (continued)

Characteristic	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Current School/Training Status (%)			
In School, 12 Credits or More	11.0	3.9	5.7
In School, Less than 12 Credits	4.9	2.8	5.3
In Training, Full-time	3.4	2.0	27.3
In Training, Part-Time	1.3	0.3	0.4
In Both School and Training	1.3	0.4	0.0
Not in School/Training	69.3	78.9	54.5
Not Available	8.9	11.7	6.9
AFDC Status (%)			
Applicant	35.6	48.3	21.0
Recipient	64.2	51.6	77.0
Not Available ^b	0.2	0.0	2.0
Length of Time on Own AFDC Case (%)			
Never	16.1	25.9	6.0
Two Years or Less	28.0	30.0	45.6
More than Two Years	48.2	29.3	44.5
Not Available ^b	7.6	14.8	3.9
Registrant Discontinued from AFDC Two or More Times due to Employment in Prior Three Years (%)			
Yes	3.0	6.7	0.9
No	95.1	91.3	96.8
Not Available ^b	1.9	2.0	2.3
Employed in Prior 24 Months (%)			
Yes	54.9	66.3	49.9
No	42.0	30.6	44.4
Not Available ^b	3.2	3.2	5.7
Current Employment Status (%)			
Under 15 Hours per Week	2.4	0.9	1.3
15-29 Hours per Week	7.7	5.1	0.7
30 or More Hours per Week	0.9	0.5	0.6
Unemployed	55.3	71.6	42.3
Not in Labor Force	28.9	18.0	52.5
Not Available ^b	4.8	3.8	2.5
Average Hourly Wage of Most Recent Job (\$) ^b	5.10	6.44	4.76
Sample Size	611	541	276

SOURCE: Members of WDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

(continued)

TABLE 2.6 (continued)

All percentage calculations and averages are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row. Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

^a "Not Available" refers to information not available for the registrant because the information was missing for the individual, this item was not requested by county staff, or the individual did not reach the stage of the program model where the information was collected.

^b All averages are calculated for only those registrants who have a valid datum for that item.

^c Distributions may add to more than 100.0 percent because sample members can have children in more than one category.

^d "High School Diploma or GED Received" includes individuals for whom degree information was not available but who completed the twelfth grade.

^e This statistic indicates the percentage of registrants included in the special study on basic education which only included mandatory registrants.

^f The percentages of registrants listed below who scored 214 or below on the basic skills test, did not have a high school diploma, or had limited English speaking ability are not equal to the corresponding percentages listed elsewhere on this table because of missing data and the omission of a small number of registrants from the basic education sample (see footnote 9 of this chapter).

than Table 2.5 for seven of the eight counties.⁷

Overall, the characteristics of the mandatory orientation attenders were very similar to those of all registrants. The additional data indicate that approximately one-half of the AFDC-FG and one-quarter of the AFDC-U orientation attenders had been on their own AFDC case for more than two years. AFDC-U registrants were more likely than AFDC-FG registrants to have been employed in the past twenty-four months. The average age of the mandatory registrants was 34.

The voluntary registrants were much younger and much more apt to have at least one child under age 6. Volunteers were also less likely than the mandatory registrants to have worked in the past two years.

Overall, a large proportion -- around 60 percent -- of both the AFDC-FG and the AFDC-U registrants who attended orientation were determined to be in need of basic education, based on the criteria established by GAIN. As discussed in Chapter 1, the GAIN legislation specifies that basic education is mandatory for those determined to be in need of the service, namely, registrants who lack a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate; registrants who score below 215 on either the reading or the math portion of the basic skills test administered at orientation; or registrants with limited English. GAIN registrants can be determined to be in need of basic education for more than one reason.

Among the sample of mandatory orientation attenders, over one-half of the AFDC-FG and AFDC-U registrants lacked a high school diploma or GED certificate. More than one-quarter scored below the required score of 215 on the basic skills test, and the majority of these registrants did not have a high school diploma or GED certificate.⁸ It is notable that registrants were

⁷Table 2.6 differs from Table 2.5 in several other ways. First, Fresno registrants were not included in the subsample since complete information on their orientation attendance was not available for this report during the study period. Thus, it was not possible to discern which Fresno registrants actually did come in contact with GAIN. Second, in the other seven counties registrants who attended an orientation may have differed, in terms of demographic characteristics, from those who did not continue in the program. It is not possible to determine accurately the nature of the demographic differences between these two groups, since demographic data were not available for many of those who did not attend a GAIN orientation.

⁸A field test of the basic skills test, conducted from July to December 1986, found that 55 percent of the sample of GAIN registrants were in need of basic education, based on basic skills test scores. The different results shown here can be attributed to three factors: (1) the field test used 225, as opposed to 215, as the cutoff point; (2) the registrants examined in the field test came from a different group of counties -- Butte, Fresno, Kern, Madera, Napa, San Diego, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Ventura; differences in the demographic characteristics of the AFDC caseload between these counties and the MDRC study counties is also a factor in the differing results; and (3) the field test did not include any registrants with missing data on the basic skills test scores. In the MDRC participant flow sample, approximately one-third of the registrants
(continued...)

much more likely to score below 215 on the math test than on the reading test; in fact, very few did so on the reading test. Among mandatory registrants, 13 percent of the AFDC-FG and 24 percent of AFDC-U orientation attenders had limited English-speaking ability. The vast majority of these registrants also did not have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Appendix Tables B.1, B.2, and B.3 present demographic characteristics for orientation attenders by county. These tables indicate differences in many of the demographic variables across counties. For example, the percentage of registrants determined to be in need of basic education varied, particularly among mandatory AFDC-FG registrants, from 27 percent in Butte to 69 percent in Ventura. Santa Clara and Ventura also had a much higher proportion of persons with limited English-speaking ability in their caseloads than the other counties did. The percentage of AFDC-U registrants who had been employed in the past two years ranged from 44 percent in Santa Clara to 90 percent in Napa. These differences posed different operational challenges for each county.

IV. Data Sources and Special Studies

A number of different data sources were used for the analysis in this report, and are discussed in this section.

A. Data Tracking Participant Flow Through GAIN

In most of the counties, registrants' casefiles were the primary source of data for the analyses of participation in GAIN. State-required GAIN forms in each registrant's casefile provided some of the data and were often supplemented by other types of communications. These forms record the registrant's demographic characteristics, the registrant's program status (such as active, deregistered, reasons for deferral), and the registrant's participation in program activities. Narrative descriptions in the casefiles relating to the registrant's progression through the program were also used to verify attendance in an activity (such as referral, start, and end dates), a change in status, and other actions (employment, missed appointments, basic skills test scores). In Fresno, which was the first county to implement GAIN and was in the midst of converting to an automated records system during the study period, data on participation were collected directly from service providers.

As illustrated in Figure 2.2, program activity data for the participant flow analysis were collected for at least a six-month period following registration for all sample members. For an early-registering cohort, ten months of follow-up data are available.

^B(...continued)

were missing basic skills test scores, most likely because they had limited English-speaking ability. For further information on the results of the field test, see California State Department of Social Services (1987).

B. Special Participant Flow Studies

Special studies on two aspects of participation in GAIN were conducted. The first focused on a subgroup of GAIN registrants who did not attend an orientation -- orientation nonattenders -- and examined the individual reasons for, and GAIN staff's response to, this behavior. The second study was a detailed analysis of the participation patterns of the subgroup of registrants determined to be in need of basic education, according to the GAIN regulations. The results of these studies are discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 9, respectively. As with the participant flow analysis discussed above, the primary data sources for these studies were the state-required forms and the narratives found in the registrants' casefiles. Data collected for these special studies were merged into the larger database of participant flow information to create a historical file of registrants' characteristics and GAIN experiences.

The study of orientation nonattenders was conducted in Kern, Santa Clara, and Ventura. In these three counties mandatory registrants in the full sample who neither attended an orientation nor were deferred within two months of registration were included in the subsample.⁹ These also included (1) registrants who attended an orientation after two months of their GAIN registration and (2) individuals who never attended orientation within the research follow-up period. Data collected from the casefiles included information on the types and frequency of interactions GAIN staff had with these individuals and the reasons why registrants missed orientations. In addition, AFDC grant payment records for this special sample were examined to determine whether the registrants left welfare during this period.

The second special study examined participation among registrants in need of basic education in seven of the eight counties; Fresno was not included because complete data were not available during the study period. Included in this study were AFDC-FG and AFDC-U mandatory registrants in the full participant flow sample who were determined by the GAIN program to be in need of basic education.¹⁰ The sample consisted of (1) registrants who scored lower than 215 on the math or reading portion of the basic skills test; (2) registrants who had neither a high school diploma nor a GED certificate; (3) registrants who had limited English-speaking ability, ascertained by whether the registrant was referred to an English as a Second Language course;¹¹ and (4) registrants who were referred to a basic education activity but whose casefile did not indicate the reason for the referral.

⁹For further details on this sample, see Chapter 5.

¹⁰In Santa Clara, MDRC conducted a special pilot study of 30 registrants to test the participant flow data collection instruments and procedures. The data collection worksheet on basic education had not been completed at that time; therefore, these 30 registrants were not included in the sample of registrants determined to be in need of basic education.

¹¹"Referred to ESL" was used as a proxy for identifying registrants with limited English. Although registrants with limited English were identified on the GAIN Appraisal Forms (GAIN 26), the accuracy of this identification was inconsistent within and across counties. Thus, only those registrants who were referred to ESL were included in the basic education sample.

Data collected for this subsample included information on referrals to basic education, participation in basic education programs, reasons for not participating in basic education, and completion status. Standardized forms and case manager narratives found in the casefiles were the primary data sources. This information was collected for a period of at least four months following orientation for all sample members; eight months of follow-up data are available for an early-registering cohort.

C. Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey

MDRC also designed and administered a Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey, which provides information on the welfare department staffs' perspectives on their job responsibilities, interactions with welfare recipients, emphasis on the alternative goals of GAIN, job satisfaction and morale, as well as their perceptions of welfare recipients' motivation to become self-supporting. The survey was self-completed and was administered to all GAIN line staff and their supervisors and to a random sample of eligibility workers and supervisors in each of the eight counties studied.¹² Clerical staff were not included in the survey. GAIN staff, welfare eligibility staff, and supervisors were given slightly different versions of the survey to reflect their different responsibilities.¹³ The survey was completed by 515 welfare agency staff; Appendix Table B.4 gives the number of staff who completed the survey in each county. (Supervisor responses were collected for future analyses; they are not analyzed in this report.)

The survey was conducted approximately one year after program implementation in each county, as illustrated by Figure 2.2. This time frame was chosen so that staff responses would not reflect perspectives that were unique to the start-up phase.¹⁴ Three counties -- Napa, San Mateo, and Stanislaus -- were added to the analysis too late to be surveyed at the preferred one-year interval. In these counties the survey was administered six to ten months beyond one year of implementation. Thus, the responses of staff in these counties reflect a somewhat longer experience in operating the program.

¹²Sample sizes of 30 eligibility workers and 10 eligibility supervisors were considered minimum sample sizes. In general, 15 percent of the eligibility workers and 25 percent of the eligibility supervisors in each income maintenance office in the county were selected if this yielded the minimum sample size. In the smaller counties a higher percentage of eligibility staff were surveyed to yield the minimum sample size. In a few instances surveying 100 percent of the eligibility staff resulted in smaller than the desired sample size.

¹³Eligibility staff in Fresno received a version with questions from both the eligibility version and the GAIN staff version because their job responsibilities included both functions. (For further details on staff responsibilities in Fresno, see Chapter 3.) For this reason, eligibility staff in Fresno are included as GAIN staff in several analyses of survey data.

¹⁴In nine additional counties, the survey was also administered to WIN staff before the implementation of GAIN and to GAIN staff one year after its implementation. It will be administered again two years after implementation. The eight study counties in this report also received the survey two years after GAIN implementation. The results will be used to examine changes in staff attitudes and activities from WIN to GAIN and in GAIN over time.

An MDRC researcher passed out the survey instruments on-site. Staff who were absent were left a survey and instructed to mail it back to MDRC. Overall, staff reacted positively toward completing the survey. The response rate was at least 95 percent in all counties but Napa.¹⁵

Most of the survey questions requested responses along a seven-point scale. Most of the analyses included in the chapters report on only the "high" end of the scale, that is, responses of six or seven. The actual wording of the survey questions appears in Appendices C and D.

D. Field Research

Reports prepared by MDRC field researchers provided the bulk of the information on the organization of program staff and services, the operation of program components, the content of services, and relationships among the agencies involved in the GAIN program. The researchers based their reports on interviews with GAIN and service provider staffs and observations of GAIN program services and operations from October 1987 to April 1988. Over this period several MDRC staff spent a total of two to three weeks in each county. In most counties, the staff visited the sites in both the fall of 1987 and the spring of 1988.¹⁶

In each county the researchers conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews with welfare department managerial, supervisory, and line staff. They also interviewed representatives from providers of GAIN services -- adult schools, community colleges, the Employment Development Department, the Job Training Partnership Act agency, and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies -- including managerial staff, as well as staff who worked directly with GAIN registrants. The program services and operations observed were orientations, appraisals, job search workshops, and basic education classes.

¹⁵The response rates to the survey were: Butte, 100 percent; Fresno, 98 percent; Kern, 98 percent; Napa, 88 percent; San Mateo, 97 percent; Santa Clara, 100 percent; Stanislaus, 98 percent; Ventura, 100 percent.

¹⁶Site visits in Napa, Stanislaus, and Butte were conducted in February, March, and April 1988.

CHAPTER 3

ORGANIZING FOR GAIN

County welfare department administrators have to make a number of basic organizational decisions in putting GAIN into practice. Two of these are decisions on the overall structure of the program: how to divide responsibilities between the welfare department and other local agencies and how to structure staff responsibilities for operating GAIN within the welfare department. Welfare administrators must also decide on the primary objectives of their county GAIN program. As explained in Chapter 1, the GAIN legislation sets forth a variety of program objectives, some of which point in different directions. How each county defines the service network, organizational structure, and program emphasis of GAIN has an important influence not only on program operations, but also on registrants' experiences in GAIN, determining the nature of the services they will receive, and the focus and tone of their interactions with staff.

This chapter discusses the organizational decisions made, and some of their implications, in the eight counties studied. In doing so, it helps to set the context for understanding the subsequent chapters in this report. The first section describes different service networks created in the counties, showing the division of GAIN functions between the welfare department and other local service providers. The second section explains the different ways the counties defined the role of the welfare department's income maintenance unit, whose staff refer welfare applicants and recipients to GAIN and thus give GAIN registrants their first exposure to the program. The third section discusses the different models of case management that evolved in the counties. The fourth section describes the character and climate of the county programs, including the characteristics of the staff hired to be case managers and their views of welfare recipients, levels of job satisfaction, and relationships with GAIN registrants.

The findings reported in this chapter are based on MDRC field interviews with GAIN administrators, supervisors, and staff and with administrators at some of the subcontracting agencies providing GAIN services. The findings on staff and eligibility worker attitudes are based on MDRC's Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

I. Creating a Service Network

As noted in Chapter 1, the GAIN legislation seeks to move beyond earlier welfare employment programs by offering welfare recipients a wider range of opportunities to develop their potential for employment. The law directs the counties to provide not only job search and unpaid work experience, the more traditional offerings, but also basic education and a variety of vocational education and training activities. It further requires that, in so doing, the counties make the greatest possible use of the existing resources in the community.

Table 3.1 illustrates how the eight counties divided responsibilities for the GAIN program between the welfare department and other local agencies. (Throughout this chapter, and in the remainder of the report, the order in which the counties appear on the tables is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number of registrants, and Fresno had the highest.) In general, the welfare departments determined whether AFDC applicants and recipients were required to enter GAIN, registered them in the program, and performed overall program management and case management. The tasks involved in case management include: conducting the orientation sessions in which GAIN services and regulations are explained and the educational screening test is administered; conducting appraisal interviews in which registrants are assigned to their initial GAIN activity or temporarily deferred from participation; holding other meetings to assign them to subsequent components; monitoring their participation in GAIN activities; and, when necessary, administering GAIN's enforcement procedures and penalties.

As shown in the table, Napa was the only county to subcontract these case management and day-to-day program management operations to the local Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) agency. Before GAIN, that agency had been operating a voluntary program for long-term welfare recipients that had many features in common with GAIN. The welfare department administrators in Napa decided to build upon that experience by giving the JTPA agency direct responsibility for managing the program. In turn, the JTPA administrators, like welfare administrators in other counties, decided that its own personnel would perform case management functions.

In all the counties the welfare department subcontracted most of the service components to outside agencies. For example adult schools and other organizations supplied basic education services, while community colleges, proprietary schools, and regional occupational centers typically provided vocational education and training. While job club and job search were conducted by the welfare department in four counties and by the JTPA agency in Napa, other counties had the local office of the state's Employment Development Department provide these services.

With the exception of developing work experience positions for registrants in PREP, outside agencies were responsible for providing the services falling in the later phases of the GAIN model: career assessment and the variety of vocational education and training activities that might be specified in the registrant's Employment Development Plan created as a part of the assessment. These agencies typically included community colleges, JTPA agencies, and regional occupational centers.

All of the counties relied on local resource and referral agencies (although to different degrees) to help registrants find child care and often to make arrangements with providers. Except in two counties the GAIN staff also took part in this process.

Table 3.1 also shows that a few of the subcontractors were co-located with the GAIN office. In Napa and Ventura, for example, the adult school was in the same office complex as the GAIN program, and in Santa Clara the child care resource and referral agency was in the same

TABLE 3.1

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTED GAIN SERVICES
BETWEEN COUNTY WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER AGENCIES, BY COUNTY

GAIN Service	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Stanislaus	Kern	Santa Clara	Fresno
GAIN Registration	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD
Orientation and Appraisal	JTPA	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD
Selecting Service Providers for Registrants	JTPA	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD Other	CWD	CWD	CWD JTPA
Monitoring and Enforcement	JTPA	CWD	CWD	CWD	CWD Other	CWD	CWD	CWD JTPA Other
Providing Job Search Services	JTPA	EDD	CWD*	CWD	CWD	EDD	EDD	CWD
Providing Basic Education Services	AS**	AS CC Other	AS CC	AS**	AS CC Other	AS	AS Other	AS Other
Providing Assessment Services	JTPA	JTPA Other	JTPA CC ROC/P	CC	Other	CC	JTPA***	JTPA CC ROC/P
Providing Vocational Education/Training Services	JTPA CC ROC/P Other	JTPA CC Other	JTPA CC ROC/P	JTPA CC ROC/P	JTPA CC ROC/P Other	CC JTPA Other	JTPA CC Other	JTPA CC ROC/P
Developing PREP Positions	JTPA	CWD	JTPA	CWD	Other	CWD	CWD	CWD
Assistance in Locating Child Care	R&R	CWD R&R	CWD R&R	R&R	CWD R&R	CWD R&R	CWD R&R**	CWD R&R

SOURCE: Field interviews.

NOTES: CWD = county welfare department
AS = adult school
CC = community college
R&R = child care resource and referral
ROC/P = Regional Occupational Center/Program
JTPA = Job Training Partnership Act agency
EDD = Employment Development Department
Other = Other agencies

*EDD staff assist welfare department staff during the first week of job club.

**Staff from the outside agency performing this function are co-located with the GAIN program.

+Two different JTPA agencies provided this service.

building.

In Fresno, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus, the welfare department developed management contracts with outside agencies for help in performing certain case management functions, such as selecting specific service providers for registrants, monitoring them in those activities, or helping to control the flow of tracking information on their participation. These three counties had a relatively large number of providers, and the welfare staff reported that they felt they lacked sufficient prior involvement or experience with those agencies to develop strong relationships with them without a contract.

Thus, all told, the county welfare departments generally registered individuals for GAIN and performed program management and case management, developed PREP positions (but only rarely during the study period), and in some cases conducted job search activities. With a few exceptions, the rest of the GAIN program functions and services were the responsibility of agencies outside the welfare department.

These arrangements had a number of important implications. The first implication was that GAIN staff obviously had to work with a number of other agencies to ensure that a sufficient supply of services would be available to meet the demand generated by GAIN. As later chapters will demonstrate, the staff were successful in this: the supply of services needed to achieve GAIN's ongoing participation mandate proved not to be a major problem during the study period. A second implication was that GAIN staff had to develop effective communications with service providers to carry out their case management functions, especially those of monitoring and enforcement. Chapter 8 discusses the relationships that developed between GAIN staff and service providers, as well as some of the procedural difficulties involved in GAIN case management. A third implication was the potential for tensions to arise between GAIN staff and outside agencies, since each organization would of course have its own perspective on how to work with GAIN registrants and how the service in question should be provided. Differences in viewpoints and practices between GAIN staff and the subcontractors are the subject of the fourth section of this chapter and parts of Chapter 10.

II. Defining the Role of Eligibility Workers

Another basic organizational decision for county administrators was whether to separate all GAIN functions from the welfare department's income maintenance division or to integrate the two programs. Administrators in all the counties but Fresno reported in field interviews their belief that separating GAIN from income maintenance work would allow them to create a more "client-centered" environment for GAIN registrants. As one administrator explained:

The first or second decision we made was that the eligibility workers would have as little to do with the program as possible. We thought there was a benefit in keeping the two types of programs separate. The role of the eligibility worker is to maintain the family on the various benefit programs, and there is no incentive for them to spend

an hour counseling a client.

GAIN planners and administrators in most of the study counties described eligibility workers -- who determine applicants' eligibility for AFDC and their grant amount and annually review recipients' continuing eligibility -- as the "police" of the welfare system. Although the planners acknowledged the necessary role of these workers in guarding against welfare fraud, they viewed the workers as prone to take a legalistic approach in dealing with welfare recipients and as generally having little tolerance for those who did not cooperate. Eligibility workers were also regarded as being dissatisfied with their jobs because of their heavy caseloads, and many planners mentioned that that attitude could interfere not only with their commitment to yet another responsibility -- GAIN -- but also with their ability to develop supportive relationships with GAIN registrants.

Thus, instead of attempting to change these roles and attitudes to create a different internal environment for GAIN, welfare administrators in all counties except Fresno decided to minimize eligibility workers' involvement in the program. Moreover, planners in most counties went so far as to locate the GAIN office in a different building or even a different neighborhood from the income maintenance offices.

Nonetheless, eligibility workers were given several key roles to play within the overall GAIN program. First, it was their job to determine whether AFDC applicants or recipients were required to participate in GAIN or were exempt, based on the program's official criteria (as outlined in Appendix Table A.1). Second, they were to register those required to participate and refer them to a GAIN orientation session, as well as advise those individuals who were exempt that they could volunteer for the program. Third, throughout the course of the program they were also responsible for communicating to GAIN staff various changes in circumstances that affected registrants' status in GAIN, such as whether registrants' welfare applications had been approved or denied, when registrants left welfare, and when their mandatory or volunteer status changed. Finally, eligibility workers also helped to administer GAIN's official penalties by sending the welfare check to alternate payees for registrants in money management or by adjusting or terminating the welfare grant for registrants who had been sanctioned.

The limited interactions between the GAIN and the income maintenance units in most counties led to a number of difficulties in operating the program, particularly in getting registrants to the first step in the program -- the orientation meeting. Chapter 4 shows the number of registrants who never made it to an orientation, and Chapter 5 discusses those results in greater detail.

Fresno offers an interesting counterpoint to the experiences in the other counties studied. Here the eligibility workers bore the primary responsibility for implementing GAIN, in addition to their usual income maintenance work. This decision was partly based on program planners' belief that GAIN services would be more effectively institutionalized if they were directly linked with the primary work activity of the agency. As an administrator explained:

In the 1960s, what welfare reform consisted of was removing any

social work or casework component from the job of the eligibility worker, so you could hire cheaper people and do a better job of processing the papers -- or so it was thought. That simply has not worked. Whenever you have added additional functions to the agency but functions that were not connected to the eligibility workers' activity, over time those functions could be defunded, and the innovation withered.... What we have been doing is to return some of the casework elements to the eligibility worker position.... The biggest mistake we are making in California is setting up separate GAIN factories.

Fresno did hire some specialized GAIN staff to operate job search activities, arrange and monitor PREP placements, and prepare Employment Development Plans. But most case management functions were initially the responsibility of the eligibility workers. Over time, however, the administrators found that these workers were unable to perform both their GAIN and their income maintenance duties effectively, especially with caseloads averaging approximately 150 welfare recipients, a large portion of whom were GAIN registrants. Moreover, with nearly 300 eligibility workers, the administrators reported considerable difficulty monitoring staff decisionmaking for GAIN and ensuring that the program's rules were being applied consistently.¹ As a result, some of the eligibility workers' case management tasks were eventually transferred to specialized GAIN staff, whose numbers then increased rapidly. Still, eligibility workers in Fresno continued to track registrants who did not show up for their scheduled GAIN orientation, monitor registrants who were temporarily deferred from participation, and monitor those assigned to basic education. Thus, their role in GAIN remained much more substantial than it was in any other county.

III. Developing Models of Case Management

In organizing their programs, GAIN administrators had to decide how to delegate case management responsibilities among staff members and how many registrants to assign to each of them. The different decisions administrators made across the eight counties for the most part reflected differences in the complexity of the local service networks, as well as differing perspectives on how best to operate GAIN. Table 3.2 summarizes the decisions made on staffing and case management responsibilities in each county.

A. Generalist Versus Specialist Models

Two basic models of case management evolved across the eight counties: a generalist model

¹Staff performance of income maintenance duties were monitored more closely than the performance of their GAIN functions. This partly reflects the fact that federal and state regulations set limits on the percentage of incorrect AFDC eligibility decisions and penalize counties that exceed those limits.

TABLE 3.2

A DESCRIPTION OF GAIN STAFFING STRUCTURES AND SERVICE NETWORKS
IN THE EIGHT STUDY COUNTIES

Napa	Program management and case management were performed by the local JTPA agency. The program used specialized staff to call registrants before orientation to ensure their attendance and to handle cases that were deferred or to be placed in conciliation, money management, or sanctioning. Staff caseloads were low, averaging 71 registrants. Some staff served as case managers for JTPA clients (in a program very similar to GAIN) as well as GAIN registrants. Job search services were conducted by a special unit. The county had a simple service delivery network with, for example, only one adult school and one community college.
San Mateo	A generalist case management system was used, but two staff members specialized in developing on-the-job training positions. Staff caseloads were low, averaging 64 registrants. The service delivery network was moderately complex with, for example, four primary basic education providers, two primary assessors, and one job search provider.
Butte	A generalist case management system was used. Caseloads were low, averaging approximately 66 registrants. Orientation attenders were not assigned to a case manager until a slot within a staff member's allotted caseload became available. A special unit conducted job search. The county had a simple service delivery network, with two basic education providers and three assessment agencies.
Ventura	A generalist case management system was used, with staff caseloads averaging 89 registrants. A special unit conducted job search services. During the first year of operation, staff were specialized by assigning separate case managers to monitor registrants in basic education. The county had a simple service delivery network, with one assessment agency and one basic education provider for each of two major GAIN offices.
Kern	A generalist case management system was used, but with much higher staff caseloads -- averaging 225 registrants -- than all other counties. The county had a simple service delivery network, with one basic education provider, one job search provider, and one assessment agency.
Stanislaus	Although beginning with a generalist case management system, staff were later specialized into separate units: an intake unit to conduct orientations and appraisals; a unit that monitored registrants in basic education; one that conducted job search services; and one that wrote employment development plans and monitored registrants in job search and in post-assessment activities. Staff caseloads averaged 124 registrants. The service network was complex, with 27 basic education providers and one assessment agency.

(continued)

TABLE 3.2 (continued)

Santa Clara	A specialized case management system was used. Staff were divided into two basic units: an intake unit, with some staff conducting orientations and other staff conducting appraisal interviews; and an ongoing case management unit, with several different staff positions created to monitor registrants assigned to activities and to write Employment Development Plans. Staff caseloads averaged 121 registrants, but with a large backlog of cases not assigned to case managers. The service delivery network was complex, with, for example, six primary basic education providers, seven community colleges, one job search provider, and two assessment agencies.
Fresno	Eligibility workers, with caseloads of approximately 152 welfare recipients, 42 percent of whom were GAIN registrants, were responsible for tracking registrants who did not attend orientation, monitoring deferrals, and monitoring registrants in basic education, in addition to their income maintenance duties. Originally, eligibility workers had broader monitoring responsibilities, but these were eventually reduced. Specialized GAIN staff, with caseloads averaging 99 registrants, were used to monitor registrants in self-initiated and post-assessment activities, to conduct job search activities, and to assign and work with cases in conciliation, money management, or sanctioning. The service network was complex, with, for example, nine primary basic education providers and nine assessment agencies.

SOURCE: MDRC field interviews with GAIN administrators and staff and (for caseloads in particular) the Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

and a specialist model. Under the generalist model, a case manager begins working with a registrant at the point of appraisal and remains with that registrant throughout his or her tenure in the program.² This case manager participates in all or nearly all decisionmaking concerning the registrant, such as conducting appraisal interviews, assigning the registrant to activities, arranging support services, and monitoring his or her participation. This model was intended to give case managers a greater opportunity to know registrants as individuals and to provide more continuity in their treatment.

Under the specialized model, different staff members are responsible for different case management functions. Counties that specialized case management functions did so in a variety of ways. Several created special units to conduct GAIN orientations and appraisals; some created special units to monitor registrants assigned to basic education; some assigned responsibility for authorizing money management and sanctions to a separate unit. Counties instituted these and other patterns of specialization in the hope of operating GAIN more efficiently and treating registrants with greater consistency across staff at each stage of the program.³

Santa Clara had one of the most specialized systems and illustrates this approach. It created two basic units -- intake and ongoing case management -- each housed in separate offices. In the intake unit some staff conducted group orientation meetings; others conducted appraisals; and at various times still others were assigned to handle registrants who failed to appear at the GAIN orientation. In the ongoing case management unit, staff were responsible for monitoring registrants who had completed the intake process and for enforcing GAIN's participation mandate. When a registrant was ready for assessment, the case was transferred to another staff member who coordinated the assessment process, wrote the Employment Development Plan, and made arrangements for the new activity. The case was then transferred back to an ongoing case manager, either the initial one or someone else, to monitor the registrant's participation in the new activity. As this example shows, under the specialized model, registrants move from one worker to another as they become involved in different

²Sometimes, however, cases were reassigned among staff if the distribution of cases across staff became too uneven. In Ventura, for example, a case manager reported that during a period when GAIN was being reorganized and new staff were added, she had been assigned a new caseload six times in one year.

³Another form of specialization that evolved in some of the counties -- even some that used the generalist model -- is based on registrant characteristics rather than program stage or function. In Napa, for example, some case managers were assigned all young registrants (under age 18); others, older registrants; and still others, AFDC-U registrants -- no matter what GAIN component they were participating in. In Butte one staff member worked with all the registrants who were veterans of the Vietnam War. These strategies were designed to allow staff to develop a better knowledge of the typical problems or issues affecting particular groups and of the community services available for those groups. Similarly, registrants were sometimes assigned to staff according to where they lived in the county so that staff could more easily learn about and help them gain access to local transportation and community resources or make home visits.

aspects of the program.

Case management structures were not static during the study period, however. Some counties that had initially adopted generalist models shifted to more specialized systems, and other counties experimented with alternative patterns of specialization. Stanislaus, for example, began with the generalist model, but eventually the staff found that GAIN's complex procedures were too much to learn in their entirety and requested more specialization. Their supervisors also came to favor more specialization as a way to develop greater consistency in staff decisionmaking. Stanislaus therefore switched to a system in which the staff worked in units having more limited sets of functions, including an intake unit and several units responsible for specific GAIN components.

Ventura also introduced greater specialization over time. Here the change was motivated by poor attendance among many registrants in basic education. A special unit of staff was created to focus only on registrants in that component. (One of Ventura's two offices later dropped this unit because of the difficulty of maintaining balanced workloads among staff in different units.)

In general, administrators in the counties that had numerous service providers (especially Santa Clara, Stanislaus, and Fresno) reported having a strong incentive to specialize their case management functions, viewing it as a way to improve the staff's ability to develop relationships with outside service providers and monitor registrants' participation at those agencies. Administrators in some of the larger counties also saw specialization as a more efficient way of serving a higher volume of registrants. Later chapters consider some of the implications of the different case management systems for the counties' experiences in operating GAIN. Chapter 7, for example, discusses how the nature of orientations and appraisals differed by case management structure, and Chapter 8 explores monitoring and enforcement practices under the different models.

B. Registrant-to-Staff Ratios

In addition to the varying models for delegating case management functions, the eight counties differed in the average number of registrants they assigned to each worker. Based on estimates calculated from the results of the staff survey, the average caseload sizes for staff who performed ongoing case management duties were 71 in Napa (including other JTPA clients); 64 in San Mateo; 66 in Butte; 89 in Ventura; 225 in Kern; 124 in Stanislaus; and 121 in Santa Clara. In Fresno, eligibility workers reported a total average caseload of 152 clients, 64 (or 42 percent) of whom were GAIN registrants. The GAIN staff in Fresno reported an average caseload of 99 GAIN registrants.⁴

⁴Staff who indicated that they had a caseload of clients they were expected to follow over time were asked to estimate the number of registrants currently on their caseload. It is assumed that their responses included both active and deferred registrants. For actual wording of the question, see Appendix C, question D7b.

As this listing indicates, the two counties with the fewest registrants in their program (see Table 2.3), Napa and San Mateo, and one with a moderate number, Butte, had average staff caseloads well below 100 per worker. Registrant-staff ratios were much higher in most of the other counties. They were highest in Kern, another county with a moderate number of registrants, sometimes reaching over 300 for individual workers.

Kern's higher caseloads partly reflected the decision of GAIN administrators to stretch program resources by serving a high volume of registrants at the expense of intensive case manager involvement. Administrators elsewhere made different choices, and in some cases decided to serve only a share of the county's total pool of registrants in order to keep staff caseloads low.

In Butte, for example, a number of registrants were routinely placed in an unassigned group after orientation; they were not assigned to a case manager, and were not fully appraised, until a slot opened up in a staff member's allotted caseload. Stays in the unassigned group usually lasted up to three months. Registrants were told about this waiting period, and those wishing to begin receiving services were encouraged to try to enroll themselves in an education or training program. Similarly, Santa Clara, for a period of time, created a backlog of registrants who, after appraisal, were not assigned to case managers until spaces became available. Here, the pool of unassigned cases rose to more than a thousand registrants at one point. In both of these counties, GAIN administrators reported in field interviews that the quality of services could not be sustained with higher caseloads. Chapters 7 and 8 consider the implications of different caseload ratios for the intake process and ongoing case management.

IV. Creating an Organizational Climate

The administrative task of establishing a GAIN program at the local level is not only one of setting a structure: county planners also have to define both the overall tone of the program and the level of emphasis to place on its various goals. Most GAIN planners and administrators reported that one of their major objectives was to create a "supportive" environment for the program -- one in which the staff could develop relationships with registrants to encourage their participation, and one in which registrants would want to participate and could eventually achieve self-sufficiency. As noted in Section II above, the desire to establish this kind of environment was a major factor in the decision to separate GAIN from the income maintenance office.

A. Recruiting and Selecting Staff

One way to establish a particular environment in any organization is to select staff carefully to support that goal. Although some counties hired many GAIN staff from outside the welfare agency, most tended to hire eligibility workers in order to create a career ladder within the welfare department. GAIN offered a number of enticements. In one county, for example, staff reported that eligibility workers who moved to GAIN had smaller caseloads, freedom from work quotas, better office equipment, increased status because of GAIN's high visibility in the county,

greater decisionmaking authority, and higher salaries. The appeal of working in GAIN helped to recruit many applicants, and administrators could therefore be selective in trying to identify those applicants most likely to be both committed to the program's goals and supportive of registrants.

One county, for example, had so many applicants for GAIN positions that the administrators required that they spend some time learning about GAIN even before they were interviewed.⁵ In another county, a supervisor reported that during interviews she tried to determine whether the applicant "really believes that employment programs can work." Another said she looked for people who could empathize with registrants. A third supervisor in this county wanted people who "can relate to the lifestyle of welfare recipients" and not feel "superior" to them. Administrators in all of the study counties exhibited a great deal of pride in their staffs, and some claimed that their counterparts in other units were "jealous" because they had taken their "best" workers.

Interestingly, training in social work was not a prerequisite for GAIN positions. One administrator commented:

The program doesn't lend itself to social workers. What we really need are employment counselors like they had in CETA. Social workers tend to defer [that is, temporarily excuse registrants from participation] for problems.

One county initially assigned the GAIN appraisal function to former WIN social workers, but later transferred them out of the program. According to an administrator:

They weren't asking clients what they would like to do. They were saying, "Why don't you think about it and come back in a few weeks."

In two counties social workers did help out with troubled registrants, but they were not assigned to perform the main functions of ongoing case management.

GAIN case managers tended to view themselves as "employment persons" or "resource and referral persons" rather than as counselors or social workers. "I offer support and act as a sounding board," said one staff member. Another described the difference between her current role and her former job as a counselor:

[When I first became a case manager] I was learning not to be a counselor. My first responsibility is to keep track of clients and motivate them. I don't have a need to get into deeper things. [When I started this job] I was finding out why they had this fear of

⁵When MDRC field researchers visited the job club in this county, three eligibility workers were also visiting to familiarize themselves with the program.

working, looking at the whole picture, working on some of their coping mechanisms, identifying other areas of problems that the fear of employment was an indicator of, and then letting them discover these problems and take ownership of them. Now I pat them on the back and dust them off. It's a qualitative difference. Now I refer. If I see an underlying problem, I refer to counseling and I call them on the telephone and say, "Did you make a connection with the counselor?" It's valuable, but it's a different job.

B. A Comparison of GAIN Staff and Eligibility Workers

Data from the staff survey offer some insight into the extent to which GAIN administrators and staff succeeded in establishing a different program character and climate from those in the income maintenance office. The staff survey was administered to all line staff in counties' GAIN offices and to a sample of eligibility workers in the income maintenance offices. The following analysis compares the two groups along four dimensions: their backgrounds, their perceptions of welfare recipients, their job satisfaction, and their relationships with registrants.

Table 3.3 shows that GAIN staff were more highly educated and more likely to have worked in other employment programs than eligibility workers. A much larger proportion of GAIN staff than eligibility workers had received bachelor degrees or graduate education (70 percent versus 27 percent), and they were more likely to have worked in a WIN or JTPA program (35 percent versus 8 percent). There was a smaller difference between the two groups in the proportion who had been on welfare (27 percent of GAIN staff versus 37 percent of eligibility workers), and they exhibited very little differences in age, gender or mean length of employment in the welfare agency. Only 2 percent of GAIN staff held master's degrees in social work.

MDRC constructed a scale combining answers to 10 questions on the staff survey to measure staff attitudes toward welfare recipients. In general, a high score on the scale identifies the view that being on welfare is the consequence of broad societal or situational problems, not the fault of the individual welfare recipient. For example, a respondent who scored high on the scale was more likely to "strongly disagree" that "many people who apply for welfare would rather be on welfare than work to support their families." Table 3.4 presents the results for the percentage of welfare department staff who scored "high" (above the median score)⁶ on this scale: 34 percent of eligibility workers and 63 percent of GAIN staff. Thus, by this measure GAIN staff had more sympathetic attitudes toward welfare recipients.

⁶A score was computed for each respondent by summing the respondent's answers to the 10 questions in the scale. All respondents with a score above the midpoint of the distribution of scores for the full sample were defined as having "high" scores. The 10 questions included in this scale were taken from a larger list of questions concerning attitudes toward welfare recipients. Based on a factor analysis of this larger set, these 10 questions were identified as measuring a similar dimension of attitudes.

TABLE 3.3

STAFF BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS, BY TYPE OF STAFF AND COUNTY

Measure	GAIN Staff	Eligibility Workers
Average Age (Years)	39.8	39.2
Sex (%)		
Male	29	22
Female	71	78
Highest Grade Completed (%)		
High School Diploma or GED	3	17
Some College or Associate's Degree	27	56
Bachelor's Degree	38	15
Master of Social Work Degree	2	0
Some Graduate Work or Other Graduate Degree	30	12
Ever Received Welfare Benefits (%)	27	37
Ever Worked in the WIN Program (%)	19	4
Ever Worked in JTPA Program (%)	16	4
Average Length of Employment In Welfare Agency (Years)	5.8	6.0
Sample Size	203	224

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers in each county.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions S1, S2, S4, S9, S10, S12 and S13.

TABLE 3.4

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF WELFARE RECIPIENTS, STAFF MORALE, AND
RELATIONSHIPS WITH REGISTRANTS, BY TYPE OF STAFF

Measure and Survey Item	GAIN Staff	Eligibility Workers
Percentage High on Perception of Welfare Recipients Scale ^a	63%	34%
Percentage High on Staff Morale Scale ^a	72	29
Percent of Respondents who Answered:		
Their relationships with clients are "excellent" ^b	80	62
Staff are "very likely" to go out of their way to help a client ^b	64	33
Agency wants to set a "tough tone" with clients ^b	11	7
Number of Staff Surveyed	203	224

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff and a random subsample of eligibility workers in each county.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions A13, A17 and D3. The survey questions which were used to create the scales can also be found in Appendix C. They include questions C1 through C7, C11, C13, C14 and C15 for the "perception of welfare recipients scale," and questions A1, A2, A3, A7, A8, A9, A11 through A14, A16, A19, and A20 for the "staff morale scale."

^a "Percentage High" on each scale represents the percent of respondents who scored above the median score on the scale.

^b Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

Another scale, based on responses to 14 other questions on the staff survey, was created to measure staff morale.⁷ Table 3.4 shows that 29 percent of eligibility workers and 72 percent of GAIN staff scored above the median on this scale, indicating "high" morale. According to this measure, then, a higher proportion of GAIN staff than eligibility workers were satisfied with their jobs and believed that the morale of their co-workers was high.⁸

Several items in the staff survey were used to measure staff members' perceptions of their relationships with registrants. Although a high proportion of both GAIN staff and eligibility workers reported they had positive relationships, this perception was more common among the GAIN staff. For example, as Table 3.4 shows, 80 percent of GAIN staff said they had "excellent" relationships with registrants, whereas 62 percent of eligibility workers gave this response.⁹

As a further indication of their relationships with registrants, when asked how likely the staff in their unit were to "go out of their way to help clients," 64 percent of the GAIN staff and 33 percent of eligibility workers said this was "very likely" (Table 3.4). On the other hand, only 7 percent of eligibility workers and 11 percent of GAIN staff "strongly agreed" that their agency wanted them to "set a tough tone with clients." In other words, neither group seemed to believe they were expected to treat welfare recipients sternly.

GAIN staff responses to a related question (not asked of eligibility workers) suggest that they generally believed registrants clearly understood the staff's dual role of helping registrants and enforcing GAIN's participation mandate. Specifically, when staff were asked whether registrants viewed the staff who monitored them "much more" as helpers and counselors or "much more" as rule enforcers, most (65 percent) chose the middle response categories; in other words, they reported they were viewed as both helpers and rule enforcers.

⁷The procedures described in note 4 were also used to create this staff morale scale.

⁸One scholar has described the importance of staff morale in human service organizations in this way: "The degree of commitment to, or alienation from, their work will significantly affect the quality of relationships with clients. When staff feel positively toward their work, have a sense of control over it, and feel able to express themselves through it, they are more likely to impart these attitudes to their clients who constitute the most important component of the job. When staff members feel alienated from their work, they are also likely to feel alienated from their clients and to regard relationships with them as unrewarding." (Hasenfeld, 1983, p. 198.) The importance of staff morale is also explicitly recognized in the GAIN legislation itself, which called upon the State Department of Social Services to "exercise leadership to engender enthusiasm among counties, county welfare department directors, and county welfare department line staff, who are the principal contacts for many recipients enrolled in the program."

⁹Similarly, when asked "How often do you feel that clients do not talk candidly to you?" 39 percent of GAIN staff and 24 percent of eligibility workers said "rarely." When asked how often they felt that "clients are suspicious or apprehensive of you," 61 percent of GAIN staff and 43 of eligibility workers said "rarely."

Together, these findings indicate that, as GAIN administrators had hoped, the counties did establish GAIN programs that had a different character and climate from what could be found in the traditional income maintenance offices. GAIN staff reported having greater sympathy with welfare recipients, higher morale, and better relationships with recipients than did the eligibility workers sampled. These difficulties may have reflected differences in the criteria administrators used when hiring staff, as well as the different experiences that staff had with welfare recipients in these two divisions of the welfare department.

C. Staff Views of Registrants and Organizational Climate Across Counties

GAIN staff members' perceptions of welfare recipients, staff morale, and relationships with program registrants varied across the study counties, as shown in Table 3.5. For example, GAIN staff in Napa, San Mateo, and Butte -- counties having the lowest registrant-staff ratios and using the generalist model of case management -- were less likely than those in the other counties to consider being on welfare as the "fault" of the recipient; that is, they scored higher on the scale measuring views of welfare recipients. Among other possible factors, this finding may reflect a tendency for staff who perform the full range of case management functions with a relatively small number of registrants to get to know registrants better, which may encourage more sympathetic, or less judgmental, attitudes toward them.¹⁰

Staff morale also varied among counties, but the pattern of variation was not highly consistent with county differences in case management models or registrant-staff ratios, with one important exception. Staff morale in Kern was markedly lower than in the other counties. As Table 3.5 shows, only 27 percent of Kern respondents scored "high" on the morale scale, whereas the proportion among all GAIN staff across the counties was 72 percent. The likeliest source of Kern's lower morale was its unusually high registrant-staff ratio, a condition about which a number of staff expressed frustration in field interviews.

Finally, Table 3.5 also shows some cross-county variations in staff relationships with registrants. Again, Kern emerges as an outlier, with, for example, a smaller percentage of its GAIN staff rating their relationships with registrants as "excellent"; a smaller percentage reporting that staff in their agency were "very likely" to go out of their way to help a registrant; and a larger percentage saying their agency wanted to set a "tough tone" with registrants.

Although the patterns of county variations were not completely consistent across all of the measures of program character and climate listed in Table 3.5, one tendency is particularly noteworthy. On many of the measures the staff in Napa, San Mateo, and Butte had similar scores. Throughout this report these three counties -- distinguished from the other counties by their lower registrant-staff ratios (and for Napa and San Mateo, by their much lower volume of

¹⁰Any differences in staff attitudes at the time they were hired -- which were not measured for this study -- would also contribute to the cross-county differences shown in Table 3.5.

TABLE 3.5

GAIN STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF WELFARE RECIPIENTS, STAFF MORALE, AND
RELATIONSHIPS WITH REGISTRANTS, BY COUNTY

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Fresno ^a		Total
								GAIN	EW ^b	
Percentage High on Perception of Welfare Recipients Scale ^b	85%	84%	88%	54%	40%	56%	63%	50%	32%	63% ^c
Percentage High on Staff Morale Scale ^b	77	84	83	50	27	92	65	80	30	72 ^c
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:										
Their Relationships with clients are "excellent"	92	89	83	87	60	86	72	87	55	82 ^c
Agency wants to set a "tough tone" with clients ^d	0	16	0	12	47	0	18	7	8	11
Staff are "very likely" to go out of their way to help a client ^d	77	58	83	50	13	81	63	63	16	56
Clients view staff who monitor "much more" as helper/counselor than as rule enforcer ^d	42	33	57	8	7	23	21	20	32	25
Number of Staff Surveyed	13	19	24	26	15	36	40	30	37	240

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

(continued)

TABLE 3.5 (continued)

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions A13, A17, D3, and H14. The survey questions which were used to create the scales can also be found in Appendix C. They include questions C1 through C7, C11, C13, C14 and C15 for the "perception of welfare recipients scale," and questions A1, A2, A3, A7, A8, A9, A11 through A14, A16, A19 and A20 for the "staff morale scale."

^a "EW" stands for "eligibility workers."

^b "Percentage High" on each scale represents the percent of respondents who scored above the median score on the scale.

^c The total for this variable does not include eligibility workers in Fresno.

^d Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

GAIN registrants) -- will often form a group with similar staff practices.

D. The Goals of GAIN in Practice

The internal character of a county's GAIN program also reflects the goals that its staff emphasize in everyday practice. The staff survey asked GAIN respondents to rate a set of goals in terms of (1) how strongly their agency was emphasizing each goal in the way it was developing GAIN and (2) how important the respondent thought the goal should be.

The first column in Table 3.6 shows that over 60 percent of GAIN staff in the eight counties reported that the goal of getting registrants into unsubsidized jobs and the goal of making continuous participation in GAIN mandatory for nonexempt welfare clients were being "very strongly" emphasized by their agencies. A third goal, reducing welfare costs for the government in the long run, was reportedly less strongly emphasized, suggesting that GAIN staff were operating with a greater concern for "helping registrants" than for "helping the government."

As shown in the second column of the table, when asked whether these three goals should be an important objective in their opinion, a majority of staff strongly endorsed each of them; getting registrants into unsubsidized jobs received the strongest endorsement. At the same time, a similarly large majority also strongly endorsed the "client-centered" goals of reducing the stigma and psychological burden of individuals while they are on welfare, of giving welfare recipients more choice about the services they receive, and of improving relationships between welfare workers and welfare recipients. Nonetheless, fewer staff reported that these three goals were being "very strongly" emphasized by their agencies, as shown in the first column.

Table 3.7 presents these data by county. Notably, higher proportions of staff in Napa, San Mateo, Butte, and Stanislaus reported that the above-mentioned "client-centered" goals were being "very strongly" emphasized in their agencies, and personally viewed these goals as "very important," than in the other counties. Staff in Ventura and Kern were the least likely to report that these goals were being stressed by their agencies. Some of these county differences were reflected in the level of personal attention staff gave to registrants during the intake and ongoing case management processes, as shown later in chapters 7 and 8.

Other questions on the staff survey investigated attitudes about how the employment goals of GAIN could best be reached. GAIN staff were asked whether the more important goal of their agency was "to get jobs quickly or to raise skill levels." Table 3.8 shows that 49 percent of staff across the eight counties indicated their agency placed a "much stronger" emphasis on increasing skill levels than on quick job entry. (Only 16 percent of staff indicated that a "much stronger" emphasis was placed on quick job entry.) This emphasis was reportedly greatest in San Mateo and least in Kern. Moreover, a greater proportion, 66 percent, indicated that raising skill levels should be the "much more" important goal, in their opinion. (It is also worth noting that GAIN supervisors typically did not evaluate staff performance based on job placement rates for their individual caseloads.) Thus, many GAIN staff viewed their agencies as supporting a human capital investment approach to registrants, and they personally favored this approach even more

TABLE 3.6

GAIN STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE GOALS OF GAIN

Goal of GAIN	Percent of Respondents Who Answered:	
	Goal has "very strong" emphasis in their agency	Personally feel goal is "very important"
To get welfare clients into unsubsidized jobs	64%	72%
To reduce welfare costs for government in the long run	46	57
To make continuous participation mandatory for non-exempt clients	62	58
To reduce stigma and psychological burden of clients while on welfare	39	62
To give clients more choice about services they receive	44	61
To improve relationship between welfare workers and clients	42	64
Number of Staff Surveyed	240	240

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions P1a, P1b, P2a, P2b, P3a, P3b, P4a, P4b, P5a, P5b, P7a and P7b.

TABLE 3.7

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE GOALS OF GAIN, BY COUNTY

Goal of GAIN/ Respondent's Answer	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Total
To get welfare clients into unsubsidized jobs: "Very strongly" emphasized by their agency	85%	71%	79%	44%	67%	71%	62%	57%	64%
Personally feel goal is "very important"	77	63	88	65	67	89	69	64	72
To reduce welfare costs for government in the long run: "Very strongly" emphasized by their agency	42	61	50	52	57	38	52	36	46
Personally feel goal is "very important"	54	42	58	58	73	71	40	59	57
To make continuous participation mandatory for non-exempt clients: "Very strongly" emphasized by their agency	62	61	87	83	79	65	58	40	62
Personally feel goal is "very important"	54	56	74	60	47	77	44	56	58
To reduce stigma and psychological burden of clients while on welfare: "Very strongly" emphasized by their agency	83	50	61	17	13	49	34	31	39
Personally feel goal is "very important"	85	89	74	63	47	74	49	49	62
To give clients more choice about services they receive: "Very strongly" emphasized by their agency	77	50	58	26	40	48	45	34	44
Personally feel goal is "very important"	85	72	79	58	67	67	63	40	61

(continued)

TABLE 3.7 (continued)

Goal of GAIN/ Respondent's Answer	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Total
To improve relationship between welfare workers and clients: "Very strongly" emphasized by their agency	62%	53%	65%	16%	7%	53%	45%	36%	42%
Personally feel goal is "very important"	75	79	83	54	33	85	58	55	64
Number of Staff Surveyed	13	19	24	26	15	36	40	67	240

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions P1a, P1b, P2a, P2b, P3a, P3b, P4a, P4b, P5a, P5b, P7a and P7b.

TABLE 3.8

GAIN STAFF ATTITUDES TOWARD JOB PLACEMENT AND THE GOALS OF GAIN
AGENCY, BY COUNTY

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno ^a		Total
								GAIN	EW ^b	
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:										
Improving skills is "much more" important goal than quick job entry	33%	74%	57%	50%	13%	53%	53%	43%	39%	49% ^b
Improving skills should be "much more" important goal than quick job entry	67	84	54	65	60	67	73	60	41	66 ^b
A welfare mother is offered a low-skill, low-paying job that would make her better off financially. She has <u>two choices: either take the job and leave welfare, or stay on welfare and wait for a better opportunity.</u>										
Percent of Respondents Who:										
Would personally advise her to stay and wait for a better opportunity	33	61	17	33	13	11	14	23	11	21
Believe other staff would advise her to stay on welfare and wait for a better opportunity	18	53	18	17	7	13	13	7	13	16
Believe supervisor would advise her to stay on welfare and wait for a better opportunity	18	39	14	9	0	11	3	7	3	10
Number of Staff Surveyed	13	19	24	26	15	36	40	30	37	240

(continued)

TABLE 3.8 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions B1, B2, I1, I2 and I3.

^a"EW" stands for "eligibility workers."

^bThe total for this variable does not include eligibility workers in Fresno.

strongly. Chapters 7 and 10 illustrate how this perspective was reflected in staff practices in the intake process and in job search activities, respectively.

This general preference for raising registrants' skill levels does not mean, however, that staff believed registrants should necessarily turn down low-skilled, low-paying jobs. Respondents were asked whether they would advise a welfare mother to take such a job if it would make her "slightly better off financially" or advise her to stay on welfare and wait for "a better opportunity." Table 3.8 shows that only 21 percent indicated that they would strongly advise waiting for a better opportunity; only 16 percent believed that most GAIN staff would strongly advise this; and only 10 percent reported that their supervisors would strongly advise this. San Mateo was the outlier here, with its staff reporting a much stronger tendency to advise waiting for a better opportunity.

GAIN staff preferences for encouraging registrants to obtain more education and training were not always shared by other agencies in the GAIN network. Chapter 10 will show that these differences sometimes generated tensions between the county GAIN office and its service providers, as the following comment by the head of the Private Industry Council in one county illustrates:

You take a job training program and put it in a social services department and there's a completely different *modus operandi*. They think like welfare; we think like job trainers; and it's a really different mentality.... We try to move the client from A to B in the shortest amount of time. We believe in a lot of self-help. Often we're criticized as being too harsh with clients, like telling a client you've got a problem, while they seem to cuddle and hand-hold them. We try to be more practical. They'll dance with them for two years, but we don't. It's a different attitude.

This comment also illustrates the tensions in the GAIN legislation itself, which, as shown in Chapter 1, included the two goals of quick job entry and human capital investment. The counties were not able to resolve fully the competition between these goals in local practice, and this subject will come up again in the later chapters of this report.

V. Summary

Among the many challenges facing GAIN planners and administrators in the first counties to implement the program was the set of decisions necessary to create a new organization for the program. This chapter has shown that the counties were largely successful in creating service networks comprehensive enough to offer the main components required by the GAIN legislation; supply problems may arise in the future, however, as county programs continue to develop and if the participation rates outlined in later chapters are increased substantially.

Administrators throughout the eight counties reported having been concerned to develop

a more "client-centered" environment in the GAIN organizations they created. Here as well they were largely successful in recruiting and selecting staff who would differ from the average eligibility worker in the welfare department in their attitudes, goals, and behaviors in working with welfare recipients. Nonetheless, divorcing GAIN functions and staff from the eligibility units of the welfare department had implications for registrants' participation, which is discussed in the next three chapters. On the other hand, the experience in Fresno, where eligibility workers initially handled most GAIN functions, illustrates the difficulty of fully combining these functions with eligibility workers' traditional income maintenance duties.

Finally, steps administrators took over the first 18 months or so of organizing GAIN well illustrate the evolutionary nature of the programs in the counties studied. For instance, although several county programs began under a generalist model of case management, they later evolved toward the specialization that was instituted (and also evolving) in the other counties. Case management practices are continuing to evolve as the counties face the challenges of attracting more registrants to GAIN orientations, monitoring their participation effectively, and ensuring that the GAIN components effectively serve the program goals of promoting registrants' employability and employment. These challenges form the subject of the remaining chapters.

CHAPTER 4

AN OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPATION AMONG ALL REGISTRANTS

This chapter examines GAIN registrants' patterns of involvement in program activities in the eight study counties. The GAIN legislation requires that mandatory registrants participate continuously in these activities in exchange for their welfare benefits, and permits exempt individuals to volunteer for the program. However, the legislation also recognizes, through its "deferral" and "deregistration" policies, that employment and other situations are acceptable reasons for nonparticipation. Thus, it is unrealistic to expect that participation rates will approach anywhere near 100 percent in GAIN -- or in any other welfare employment program. The findings presented in this chapter should be viewed in this light. It should also be remembered that the results are from an early period of program implementation. Current participation patterns may differ owing to changes in county practices and differences in the characteristics of more recent registrants.

The chapter addresses five main research questions: To what extent did GAIN-mandatory registrants attend program orientations, the first program requirement? To what extent did they go on to participate in a GAIN component for at least one day? Which program components engaged the greatest numbers of registrants? Were participants active on a continuous basis, that is, as long as they remained GAIN-registered during the period studied? Finally, to what extent were registrants deferred or deregistered, and thus not required to participate at some point during the follow-up period? The chapter also sets up a framework for examining the topics to be covered in the rest of the report by highlighting the critical junctures in the program model at which the actions taken by both registrants and program staff played a key role in influencing the flow of individuals through GAIN.

The participation measures used in this chapter, as well as in the rest of the report, are longitudinal ones. The measures are applied to data for a sample of persons in the eight counties (the sample described in Chapter 2) who registered for GAIN between December 1986 and June 1987. Some of the measures track the participation of these sample members over the six months following their initial program registration; others trace their participation over the four months following their attendance at an orientation session. Some analyses do not include results for Fresno -- the first county to implement GAIN -- because complete data on orientation attendance in that county were not available for this report for the period studied.

This chapter and the next one follow the experiences of all GAIN registrants over the six-month follow-up period. As this chapter shows, many registrants did not attend a program orientation, the first GAIN requirement and the prerequisite for participation in a GAIN component in the counties studied. The next chapter discusses reasons for the fall-off in participation at the juncture between registration and orientation. Chapter 6, on the other hand, looks in depth at the later participation patterns of those registrants who did attend an

orientation. These registrants deserve close attention because they are the ones with whom the GAIN staff had an opportunity to work.

The first section of this chapter examines the participation rates and presents the framework highlighting the critical junctures between the three main stages in the GAIN model: registration, orientation and appraisal, and participation in a GAIN component. The second section examines rates of participation in the various program components over the six-month follow-up period. Subsequent sections present rates of deferral, deregistration, referral to money management, sanctioning, and employment. The final section of the chapter examines participation patterns among the voluntary registrants and compares their behavior with that of the mandatory registrants.

I. Participation Among All Mandatory Registrants

Figure 4.1 illustrates the framework for tracking registrants' participation used throughout the remainder of the report.¹ As shown in the figure, the junctures between registration and orientation and between orientation and participation in a program component represented points at which large numbers of registrants either did not show up for or were diverted from participation in GAIN. During the six-month follow-up period almost one-third of all AFDC-FG mandatory registrants never attended an orientation, and about half of those who were oriented or appraised never participated in a GAIN component. Participation patterns were similar among AFDC-U registrants.

This section presents more specific results underlying the top four boxes of the figure, namely, rates of attendance at a GAIN orientation or appraisal, rates of participation in a GAIN component, and rates of participation on a continuous basis, as well as data on the reasons for registrants' lack of participation, as noted in GAIN casefiles. The tables appearing in this and the next section present breakdowns by AFDC-FG, AFDC-U, and voluntary registrants, and by county.² However, voluntary registrants are not discussed until the third section.

A. Attendance at a GAIN Orientation or Appraisal

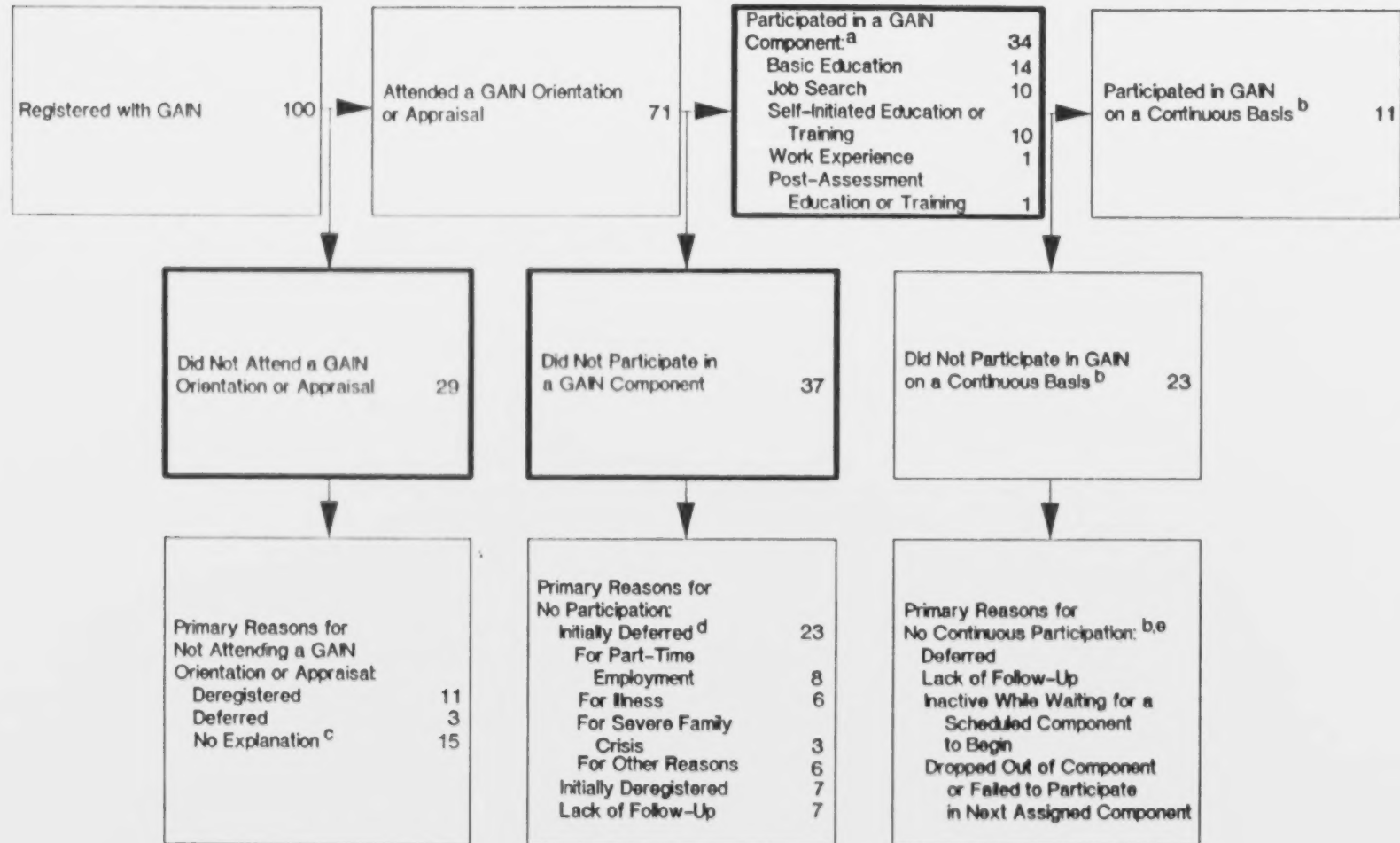
Welfare applicants and recipients required to participate in GAIN register for the program at their local income maintenance office and then are usually referred to a GAIN office for orientation and appraisal. Registration and referral thus represent the first stage in the GAIN process.

¹Figure 4.1 is based on a 966-person subsample of AFDC-FG mandatory registrants in seven of the eight counties studied. Results for Fresno are not included because of a lack of information on orientation attendance in that county. Chapter 2 contains a full discussion of the types of data collected in each county.

²All cross-county statistics presented in this chapter are weighted, according to the procedure described in Chapter 2, to reflect counties' GAIN caseload sizes. This gives, for example, the most weight to registrants in Santa Clara and the least weight to registrants in Napa.

FIGURE 4. 1

PARTICIPATION PATTERNS FOR 100 TYPICAL AFDC-FG MANDATORY REGISTRANTS
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION



(continued)

FIGURE 4.1 (continued)

SOURCE: 100 typical members of MDRC's participant flow sample.

NOTES: Fresno is not included in the figure because of unavailable data.

^a Registrants can participate in more than one type of component.

^b Registrants were considered to have participated on a continuous basis if they were active in at least 70 percent of the days in which they were registered with the program.

^c GAIN casefiles included no information explaining why these registrants did not attend orientation.

^d Registrants can be deferred more than once for different reasons but only the reason for the first deferral is indicated here. "Other reasons" includes lack of transportation, emotional or mental problems, legal difficulties, temporary layoffs from jobs, "soft" mandatory status (registrant was attending school and had a child under six years of age), alcoholism or drug addiction, illegal alien status and lack of child care.

^e Numbers of registrants with the listed primary reasons for no continuous participation were not collected for this study.

As shown in the second box of Figure 4.1, "Attended a GAIN Orientation or Appraisal," 71 percent of the AFDC-FG mandatory registrants actually attended orientation or appraisal (or both) within six months of their registration; 29 percent did not.³ Although almost one-half of the registrants who failed to attend an orientation were eventually deregistered or temporarily deferred from the program, more than one-half were never in either of these situations.

These data therefore suggest that the point in the model between the income maintenance office and GAIN orientation represents a critical juncture at which a large number of mandatory registrants cease to fulfill the participation mandate. Chapter 5 discusses how GAIN was presented to registrants in the income maintenance offices, reasons for their lack of attendance at orientation, and the actions taken by GAIN staff in response to those registrants who did not have an acceptable reason for failing to attend.

B. Participation in a GAIN Component

In the appraisal interview that follows orientation, GAIN staff, together with the registrant, make decisions regarding his or her next steps in the program. Staff assign registrants to basic education or job search programs, approve activities in which registrants are already involved, or temporarily defer registrants from participation in a program component.

As shown in Figure 4.1, just over one-third of all AFDC-FG registrants (or almost one-half of those who attended a program orientation and were appraised) actually participated in a job search, education, training, or work experience activity for at least one day. Participation in basic education programs was the most common activity pursued, followed by job search. Chapters 9 and 10 provide information on the nature of these program components as well as evidence that component providers were able to provide services to all registrants referred to them.

As shown in the figure, three general reasons accounted for the lack of participation among the remaining registrants. Most common was their having been deferred from the program during appraisal and remaining in that status throughout the six-month follow-up period. Among the main reasons for deferral were being employed part-time, being ill, and undergoing a family crisis. Chapter 7, which describes the orientation and appraisal process in detail, explains how

³As Chapter 5 will show, in some counties several months elapsed before registrants appeared at a GAIN office. Although registrants in Napa, Ventura, Kern, and Stanislaus generally attended orientation shortly after their registration, many registrants in Butte, Santa Clara, and San Mateo experienced long lags between their registration and orientation attendance. This result reflects county differences in orientation scheduling procedures and methods of follow-up for those who initially failed to attend orientation. Cumulative orientation attendance rates help to illustrate this lag. In Santa Clara, for example, 16 percent of the AFDC-FG mandatory registrants had attended an orientation within one month of registration; 31 percent, within two months of registration; and 43 percent, within three months. The percentages continued to climb, though slowly, reaching 57 percent by the end of six months.

GAIN staff made decisions on both deferrals and assignments to program components.

A smaller group of mandatory registrants did not participate in a GAIN component because they were deregistered after their orientation but before they had a chance to participate in a program component. Individuals are deregistered when they move out of the county, when their welfare cases are closed, or when they continue to receive welfare but are no longer required to participate in GAIN, in most cases because of the birth of a child or full-time employment.⁴ Finally, information in the casefiles of another small group of nonparticipants suggested record-keeping lapses or a lack of follow-up on the part of program staff.

C. Participation on a Continuous Basis

The numbers presented in the preceding subsection assess only the early success of GAIN in eliciting at least one day of participation from all registrants. GAIN's mandate, however, is to involve registrants in program activities on a continuous basis. Figure 4.1 indicates that few registrants met this requirement. Over the six-month study period only 11 percent of all AFDC-FG mandatory registrants -- and only 32 percent of those who participated for at least one day -- remained enrolled in a GAIN activity most of the days they were registered for the program.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, the most common reasons for participation on a less than continuous basis included deferral, a lack of contact or action by staff, inactivity while waiting for a scheduled component to begin, noncompletion of a component, and failure to participate in a next-assigned component. Chapter 8 examines the various case management practices and GAIN service provider relationships that may have contributed to some of these reasons, as well as the actions GAIN staff took to deal with registrants who failed to attend or dropped out of their assigned activity.

D. Summary Data and Variations Among Counties

Table 4.1 presents the data underlying Figure 4.1 but for AFDC-U mandatory registrants and volunteers, as well as for AFDC-FG registrants. The table distinguishes among mutually exclusive participation outcomes: never attending a GAIN orientation; having attended a GAIN orientation but never participating in a GAIN component; and having attended a GAIN orientation and subsequently participating in a GAIN component for at least one day. In Figure 4.1 the boxes representing these statuses are highlighted in bold.

The results indicate that the mandatory registrants who registered in late 1986 or the first half of 1987 in the early-implementing counties studied by MDRC faced an almost equal chance of having one of three different GAIN experiences: Between one-quarter and one-third of the registrants did not attend a program orientation and therefore had no contact with GAIN; over one-third attended a GAIN orientation but did not participate in a program component, in most cases because they were deferred; and the remaining group -- roughly one-third of all mandatory

⁴The data available for this study did not permit an accurate estimation of the frequency of these reasons for deregistration in the eight counties.

TABLE 4.1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REGISTRANTS
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION,
BY GAIN STATUS, ASSISTANCE CATEGORY, AND PARTICIPATION STATUS

Participation Status	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Did Not Attend Orientation ^a	29.2%	29.0%	34.4%
Attended Orientation, but Not Active	37.3	34.9	20.7
Initially Deferred, Never Deregistered	17.2	11.1	1.6
Initially Deferred, Deregistered Later	5.9	5.0	0.3
Initially Deregistered	7.3	11.0	13.6
Never in Any Activity or Status	7.0	7.8	5.2
Attended Orientation and Active, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training	33.5	36.1	44.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	966	838	429

SOURCE: MDRC's participant flow sample.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these participation statuses because of unavailable data.

Individuals in all three participation statuses could have been placed in money management or sanctioned. This information is not included in the table.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent and subcategory percentages may not add to category percentages because of rounding.

^a"Did Not Attend Orientation" means that the individual did not attend orientation within six months of registration.

^b"Active" means that the individual attended job search, education, training or work experience activities for at least one day. It does not include orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

registrants -- both attended a GAIN orientation and went on to participate in a program component for at least one day.

Thus, these data further illustrate the two critical junctures in the GAIN program model, raising several programmatic issues: of motivating participants to attend both the orientation and their first day in a program component; of appropriate follow-up to track down those registrants who fail to attend; of the assignments made during the orientation/appraisal; and of the extent and length of deferrals granted. Again, these issues form the subject of later chapters.

Table 4.2 indicates that registrants' degree of involvement in GAIN varied across the seven counties included in this particular analysis, as shown in the different paths followed by registrants at the two critical junctures noted above. These participation pattern differences across counties reflect a diversity of local conditions, registrant characteristics, and implementation difficulties.

Several examples are illustrative. For example, in Santa Clara and San Mateo, large numbers of registrants did not attend a GAIN orientation within the follow-up period. As Chapter 5 will show, these two counties had difficulty instituting effective tracking procedures during the time period studied, which in turn resulted in little or slow follow-up on those who did not keep initial orientation appointments. In another county, Stanislaus, most mandatory registrants did attend a program orientation, but many of the attenders did not go on to participate in a GAIN activity. Chapter 7 will show that many of the orientation attenders in Stanislaus were deferred from participation because they were employed part time.

E. Coverage Among All Participants

The above issues can also be examined by determining the proportion of registrants who either participated, were deregistered, or were deferred within six months of registration. This proportion represents those "covered" by the program in some way.

According to Figure 4.2, over three-quarters of all registrants were either active in a GAIN component (that is, attended an activity for at least one day), deregistered, or deferred at some point during the six-month follow-up period. Thus, the disposition of most cases was generally consistent with GAIN's policies. A small number of the remaining one-quarter of registrants were in conciliation, but most had no indication in their casefiles that staff had followed up with them.

As noted above, approximately one-third of all registrants participated in an activity (not including orientation, appraisal, or assessment) within this period. Among the AFDC-FG mandatory registrants, an additional 25 percent were never active, but were deregistered by the end of the six months following registration. An additional 20 percent were neither active nor deregistered, but were deferred within the follow-up period. In total, 78 percent of all AFDC-FG mandatory registrants fit one of these three statuses.

Figure 4.2 indicates that these proportions were somewhat different for AFDC-FG and AFDC-U registrants: AFDC-U registrants were more likely than AFDC-FG mandatory

TABLE 4.2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REGISTRANTS WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION,
BY GAIN STATUS, ASSISTANCE CATEGORY, PARTICIPATION STATUS, AND COUNTY

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
<u>AFDC-FG Mandatory Registrants</u>								
Did Not Attend Orientation	3.5%	36.3%	28.0%	11.5%	16.2%	18.9%	42.6%	22.4%
Attended Orientation, But Not Active	40.7	32.5	33.6	47.5	35.8	53.8	31.9	39.4
Initially Deferred, Never Deregistered	17.4	14.0	11.2	25.0	10.8	25.2	17.0	17.2
Initially Deferred, Deregistered Later	3.5	3.2	0.7	10.1	10.8	13.3	2.8	6.3
Initially Deregistered	18.6	8.3	9.1	6.8	11.5	7.0	5.0	9.5
Never in any Activity or Status	1.2	7.0	12.6	5.4	2.7	8.4	7.1	6.3
Attended Orientation and Active, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training	55.8	31.0	38.5	41.2	48.0	27.3	25.5	38.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<u>AFDC-U Mandatory Registrants</u>								
Did Not Attend Orientation	0.0	42.1	31.2	15.0	19.5	22.5	39.7	24.3
Attended Orientation, But Not Active	36.0	25.0	35.7	47.2	32.9	53.6	25.2	36.5
Initially Deferred, Never Deregistered	0.0	3.9	7.1	18.1	3.4	16.6	13.0	8.9
Initially Deferred, Deregistered Later	6.0	5.3	1.3	17.3	7.4	6.6	0.8	6.4
Initially Deregistered	30.0	6.6	13.0	8.7	18.1	20.5	3.1	14.3
Never in Any Activity or Status	0.0	9.2	14.3	3.1	4.0	9.9	8.4	7.0
Attended Orientation and Active, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training	64.0	32.9	33.1	37.8	47.7	23.8	35.1	39.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(continued)

TABLE 4.2 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
<u>AFDC-FG Voluntary Registrants</u>								
Did Not Attend Orientation ^a	0.0%	37.0%	---	30.3%	---	---	38.5%	26.5%
Attended Orientation, But Not Active ^b	51.8	23.1	---	23.6	---	---	16.5	28.8
Initially Deferred, Never Deregistered	2.1	0.9	---	5.6	---	---	1.1	2.4
Initially Deferred, Deregistered Later	0.7	0.9	---	1.1	---	---	0.0	0.7
Initially Deregistered Never in any Activity or Status	48.2	17.6	---	16.9	---	---	8.8	22.9
	0.7	3.7	---	0.0	---	---	6.6	2.8
Attended Orientation and Active, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training	48.2	39.8	---	46.1	---	---	45.1	44.8
Total	100.0	100.0	---	100.0	---	---	100.0	100.0
Sample Sizes:								
Mandatory AFDC-FG Registrants	86	157	143	148	148	143	141	966
Mandatory AFDC-U Registrants	50	76	154	127	149	151	131	838
Volunteers	141	108	---	89	---	---	91	429

SOURCE: MDRC's participant flow sample.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Individuals in all three participation statuses could have been placed in money management or sanctioned. This information is not included in the table.

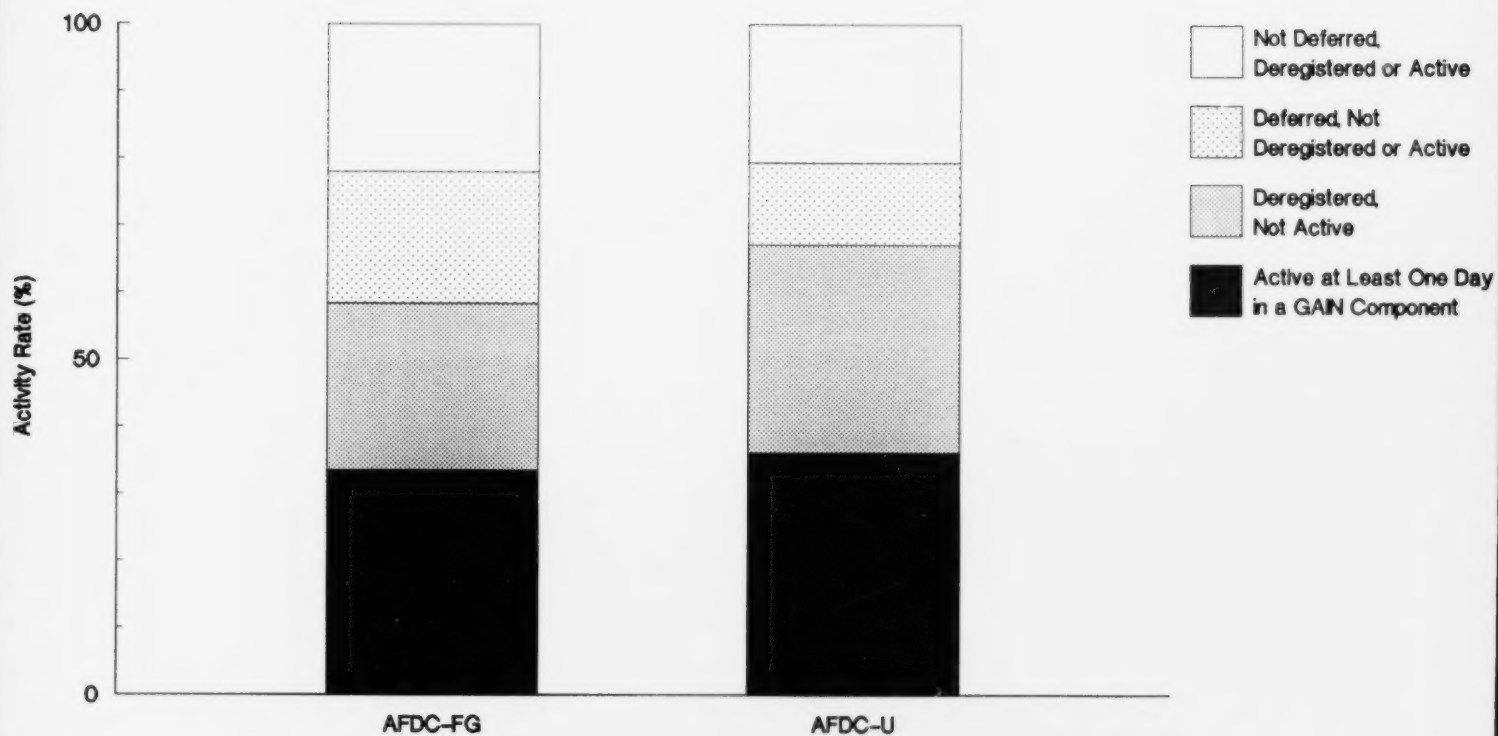
Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent and subcategory percentages may not add to category percentages because of rounding.

^a"Did Not Attend Orientation" means that the individual did not attend orientation within six months of registration.

^b"Active" means that the individual attended job search, education, training or work experience activities for at least one day. It does not include orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

FIGURE 4.2

PROGRAM STATUS OF MANDATORY REGISTRANTS
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION



registrants to deregister and not participate during the six months following registration, and less likely to be deferred during this period.

The proportion of registrants who were either active, deregistered, or deferred approached or exceeded 90 percent in most of the study counties. It was lowest in Santa Clara -- about 60 percent. (See Appendix Tables E.1 and E.2.)

II. Participation in Each of the GAIN Components

One of the goals of GAIN is to provide a variety of program services, tailored to fit registrants' individual needs. Table 4.3 summarizes the data on participation in each of the various GAIN components for AFDC-FG and AFDC-U, and voluntary registrants, whether or not they attended an orientation. Specifically, the rates indicate the proportion of GAIN registrants who, within six months of their registration, took part in a GAIN component for at least one day. Since the participation rates calculated did not differ substantially between the AFDC-FG and AFDC-U mandatory registrants, this section will discuss the results for the AFDC-FG mandatory registrants, who make up the larger of the two groups; the results for AFDC-U registrants will be noted only when the rates for these two groups differed substantially.⁵

As noted earlier, and shown at the top of Table 4.3, 71 percent of all mandatory registrants had attended an orientation within six months of their registration. Attendance at a GAIN orientation, however, was only the prerequisite for participation in job search, education, training, or work experience.

The broadest measure of post-orientation activity is that shown as the second indicator at the top of Table 4.3. Slightly over one-third of all mandatory registrants (35 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants and 36 percent of the AFDC-U registrants) participated in job search, education, training, or work experience activities for at least one day within the six-month period following their registration.⁶

Although these rates are low, previous research has indicated that it is unrealistic to expect high participation rates in welfare employment programs. There are several reasons for this. First, many individuals may find jobs that cause them to be deferred, if the job is part time, or deregistered, if it is full time, before they participate in any program components. Second, other registrants may be denied AFDC or deregister before participating for reasons other than employment. Third, during appraisal interviews program staff may judge some registrants as being in circumstances that make it inappropriate to assign them to an activity and defer them,

⁵As noted in Chapter 2, AFDC-U registrants accounted for 41 percent of all individuals who were required to register for GAIN during the sample enrollment periods in the eight study counties.

⁶Since results for Fresno were excluded from the statistics presented in Table 4.1 but included in most of those shown in Table 4.3, the participation rates differ slightly between the two tables.

TABLE 4.3

PERCENT OF REGISTRANTS INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION, BY GAIN STATUS AND ASSISTANCE CATEGORY

Activity	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Attended Orientation ^{a,b}	70.8%	71.0%	65.6%
Participated, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training ^c	34.9	36.3	44.9
Participated, Excluding Self-Initiated Education or Training ^c	26.6	31.5	22.8
Participated in Any Job Search	10.2	12.7	11.8
Job Club	7.6	7.2	10.8
Supervised Job Search ^b	3.2	7.1	1.4
90-Day Job Search	0.8	1.1	0.8
Participated in Any Education or Training	26.3	26.1	37.7
Self-Initiated Education or Training	8.6	5.0	24.1
Program-Referred Education or Training	17.9	21.2	14.6
Basic Education ^e	17.2	20.3	13.8
English as a Second Language	3.8	10.9	1.1
Adult Basic Education	9.7	7.2	6.2
GED Preparation	4.7	3.5	6.7
Post-Assessment Education or Training	0.9	0.9	2.2
Assessed	5.3	5.7	4.1
Participated in Work Experience ^b	0.7	0.6	0.3
Deferred ^b	35.3	28.0	4.7
Referred for Money Management ^b	6.3	4.7	0.1
Deregistered ^b	28.9	39.4	55.8
Due to Sanctioning	0.5	0.6	4.8
Due to Other Reasons	28.5	38.8	51.0
Received GED, Post-Appraisal	0.9	1.2	3.9
Employed ^{b,f}	19.1	26.3	13.9
Sample Size	1110	988	429

SOURCE: MDRC's participant flow sample.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

(continued)

TABLE 4.3 (continued)

Subcategory percentages may not add to category percentages because sample members can be included in more than one activity.

^a "Attended Orientation" includes individuals who attended orientation within six months of registration.

^b Fresno is not included because of unavailable data.

^c This includes participation in job search, education, training and work experience activities. It does not include attendance at orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

^d Data are available only for the first occurrence of self-initiated education or training.

^e Included here is program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

^f "Employed" includes any indication of employment found in individuals' casefiles, including employment that resulted in deferral or deregistration or that occurred after an individual left welfare.

for example, because they are ill. Finally, some registrants may decide not to attend the program activity to which they are assigned and may eventually be sanctioned. These issues are explored in more detail in the remainder of this chapter and in Chapter 6.

On average, GAIN's six-month participation rates at this stage of program implementation are nonetheless somewhat lower than, but in the general range of, those achieved by other welfare employment programs studied by MDRC. However, precise comparisons are impossible because of differences in program models, target populations, and program settings. In MDRC's study of mandatory welfare employment programs in six states in the early- to mid-1980s, roughly half of the targeted individuals participated within follow-up periods somewhat longer than those used in this report.⁷ In San Diego's Saturation Work Initiative Model (SWIM) demonstration, about two-thirds of the program registrants participated in some activity within twelve months of initial program entry.⁸ These initiatives, however, were usually based on simpler program models and emphasized shorter term participation requirements than GAIN. They also made job search and unpaid work experience -- not basic education -- the initial program component, unlike GAIN. Because GAIN is more complex, and because basic education programs require a substantial time investment from registrants, eliciting participation is a greater challenge in GAIN than in programs previously studied by MDRC.

Interestingly, although the rate of participation in a GAIN component was approximately 35 percent for all counties combined, the rates for some of the individual counties did reach the levels of previously studied welfare employment programs. As shown in Table 4.4, the within-county participation rates ranged from 26 percent of the mandatory AFDC-FG registrants in Santa Clara to 56 percent of the mandatory AFDC-FG registrants in Napa. (Appendix Table E.3 displays county rates for AFDC-U registrants.) Much of the county variation in participation rates is due to county differences in the proportion of registrants who attended

⁷Although the GAIN follow-up period available for this report was only six months, whereas most of the evaluations of work/welfare initiatives used a nine- to twelve-month follow-up period, almost all GAIN registrants who were active within ten months of registration participated in GAIN within six months of registration. Thus, the difference between the follow-up period used in this report and those used in previous studies should not have resulted in differences in the participation rates calculated. In the Arkansas WORK Program 38 percent of the sample studied participated within a nine-month follow-up period (Friedlander, 1985, p. 55). In the Baltimore Options program 45 percent of the targeted individuals participated within twelve months of their initial referral to the program (Friedlander, 1985, p. 63). In the Cook County, Illinois, WIN Demonstration Program 47 percent of those randomly assigned to a treatment group participated within nine months of their assignment (Friedlander, 1987, p. 48). About 49 percent of the AFDC applicants in the San Diego Employment Preparation and Experimental Work Experience Program participated within a nine-month follow-up period (Goldman, 1986, p. 47). In Virginia's Employment Services Program, 58 percent of the targeted individuals participated within this same follow-up period (Riccio, 1986, p. 51).

⁸In San Diego's SWIM program 64 percent of all registrants participated within a twelve-month follow-up period. Most participants were active in job search; fewer participated in education or training activities, or work experience (Hamilton, 1988, p. 105).

TABLE 4.4

PERCENT OF ALL AFDC-FG MANDATORY REGISTRANTS INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION, BY COUNTY

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Unweighted Total
Attended Orientation ^{a,b}	96.5%	63.7%	72.0%	88.5%	83.8%	81.1%	57.4%	---	77.6%
Participated, Including Self- Initiated Education or Training ^c	55.8	31.2	38.5%	41.2	48.0	27.3	25.5	38.9	38.3
Participated, Excluding Self- Initiated Education or Training ^c	43.0	22.9	17.5	30.4	39.2	20.3	19.1	34.0	28.3
Participated in Any Job Search	30.2	7.0	13.3	10.8	23.6	7.7	5.0	9.7	13.4
Job Club	29.1	3.2	12.6	5.4	8.1	7.7	5.0	9.7	10.1
Supervised Job Search ^b	14.0	2.5	1.4	4.1	14.9	0.0	0.0	---	4.6
90-Day Job Search	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.4	2.0	0.0	0.7	---	0.7
Participated in Any Education or Training	40.7	26.1	25.9	31.8	29.1	21.0	20.6	31.3	28.3
Self-Initiated Education or Training	15.1	8.9	21.0	10.8	9.5	7.0	6.4	5.6	10.5
Program-Referred Education or Training	25.6	17.2	4.9	20.9	19.6	14.0	14.2	26.4	17.8
Basic Education ^e	18.6	15.9	3.5	20.9	18.9	14.0	13.5	25.7	16.4
English as a Second Language	1.2	1.9	1.4	6.1	0.7	0.7	6.4	3.5	2.7
Adult Basic Education	8.1	10.2	0.0	10.1	5.4	6.3	6.4	20.1	8.3
GED Preparation	9.3	4.5	2.1	5.4	13.5	7.0	0.7	5.6	6.0
Post-Assessment Education or Training	10.5	1.3	1.4	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7	1.4	2.0
Assessed	17.4	3.8	7.7	2.0	6.1	2.1	0.7	11.8	6.5
Participated in Work Experience ^b	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.0	0.0	---	0.9

(continued)

TABLE 4.4 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Unweighted Total
Deferred ^b	47.7%	36.9%	21.7%	51.4%	39.9%	65.0%	24.1%	---	41.0%
Referred for Money Management ^b	5.8	9.6	1.4	6.8	3.4	8.4	7.8	---	6.2
Deregistered ^b	33.7	36.3	30.1	35.8	40.5	35.7	19.1	---	33.0
Due to Sanctioning	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7	---	0.4
Due to Other Reasons	33.7	35.0	30.1	35.8	39.9	35.7	18.4	---	32.7
Received GED, Post-Appraisal	2.3	1.9	0.7	0.0	2.0	2.1	0.0	1.4	1.3
Employed ^{b, f}	31.4	18.5	14.7	29.1	25.7	28.7	12.1	---	22.9
Sample Size	86	157	143	148	148	143	141	144	1110

SOURCE: MDRC's participant flow sample.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

Subcategory percentages may not add to category percentages because sample members can be included in more than one activity.

^a "Attended Orientation" includes individuals who attended orientation within six months of registration.

^b Fresno is not included because of unavailable data.

^c This includes participation in job search, education, training and work experience activities. It does not include attendance at orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

(continued)

TABLE 4.4 (continued)

^d Data are available only for the first occurrence of self-initiated education or training.

^e Included here is program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

^f "Employed" includes any indication of employment found in individuals' casefiles, including employment that resulted in deferral or deregistration or that occurred after an individual left welfare.

orientation. Although there is not a perfect correlation, the counties showing higher rates of attendance at orientation also tended to have higher rates of participation in the GAIN components.

The participation rates presented so far encompass both registrant-initiated activity as well as activity resulting from referrals by program staff. The third general indicator in Table 4.3, on the other hand, represents a more limited definition of post-orientation activity. This rate does not count activities the registrants initiated on their own. The results for this measure show that within six months of registration 27 percent of all mandatory AFDC-FG registrants and 32 percent of all AFDC-U registrants had participated in a program-operated or program-arranged activity for at least one day.

A. Job Search

As described in Chapter 1, the legislation specifies that job search activities should generally be the first step for GAIN registrants who score above a specified level on the reading and math tests of basic skills and possess a high school diploma. In addition, registrants whose test results or educational background indicate a need for basic education may also choose to participate initially in job search activities, that is, before enrolling in basic education programs. Table 4.3 indicates that, within six months of their registration, 10 percent of the AFDC-FG mandatory registrants and 13 percent of the AFDC-U mandatory registrants in the sample participated in job search activities for at least one day. Among those who participated, most were involved in job clubs. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10, the GAIN staff generally encouraged this type of job search activity, considering it more effective and appropriate for GAIN registrants than supervised job search. AFDC-U registrants were more frequently active in supervised job search than AFDC-FG registrants. Very few registrants were active in 90-day job search services, which were available after assessment.

B. Education and Training

Education and training are a major part of the GAIN program goals. As noted above, the GAIN legislation requires participation in basic education programs, depending on the registrant's test scores and educational background. In addition, the program regulations specify that registrants who are already enrolled in education or training programs as of their GAIN registration can continue in these "self-initiated" activities if their programs prepare them for an occupation currently in need of workers. Finally, GAIN offers further training activities at a later stage in the program model, after the formal assessment component.

All told, within six months of their registration over 26 percent of all mandatory registrants had participated in some type of education or training activity, pre- or post-assessment, as shown in Table 4.3. Most of these participants were involved in program assignments that were arranged for them by GAIN staff; about a quarter participated in self-initiated activities.

Almost all the program-arranged education or training activities consisted of basic education programs, including English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and high school equivalency (GED) preparation. Over 17 percent of the mandatory AFDC-FG

registrants and over 20 percent of the AFDC-U registrants participated in these activities at least one day over the six-month follow-up period. The mandatory AFDC-FG registrants were most concentrated in the ABE programs, whereas the AFDC-U registrants were most concentrated in the ESL programs, reflecting the high percentage of limited English speakers among this population. The mandatory registrants in self-initiated activities were most often involved in post-secondary education or vocational training programs (not shown here).

C. Career Assessment

Only a small proportion of mandatory registrants -- around 5 percent -- reached the career assessment stage of the GAIN model within the six-month follow-up period. As a result of this assessment, registrants can be assigned to post-secondary education, vocational training, on-the-job training, or PREP (Pre-employment Preparation, which is unpaid work experience). Because so few registrants were assessed, less than 1 percent of all registrants participated in post-assessment education or training, or in PREP, within the six-month follow-up period.

Although assessment is an activity designated to occur midway into the GAIN program model, the results for an early-registering group of individuals (not shown here) indicate that assessment rates did not increase substantially with a longer follow-up period.⁹ Among these individuals the rates of assessment rose by, at most, only two percentage points when the follow-up period was increased from six to ten months. As will be discussed in later chapters, several factors -- the proportion of registrants who did not attend a GAIN orientation, the frequency and length of deferrals, the proportion of registrants who deregistered from the program, and the length of time registrants spent in basic education -- explain why the registrants rarely reached this stage of the GAIN model.

Among the registrants included in the analysis in this section, almost all who eventually participated in GAIN did so within six months of registration; few individuals began participating after the six-month follow-up period had elapsed. For a group of early registrants, ten-month participation rates were only a few percentage points higher than six-month rates.¹⁰

III. Deferral, Money Management, Sanctioning, and Deregistration

This section discusses the findings on the extent to which registrants were deferred or

⁹Ten months of post-registration follow-up data were available for approximately 33 percent of all the sampled registrants. This early-registering group (including volunteers) consists of 269 San Mateo registrants, 166 Ventura registrants, 162 Napa registrants, 127 Stanislaus registrants, 86 Kern registrants, 30 Santa Clara registrants, and 5 Butte registrants -- all of whom registered between December 1986 and April 1987. Registrants in Fresno did not have sufficient follow-up to be included in this sample.

¹⁰Among the sample for which ten months of follow-up are available, the six-month participation rates were 38 percent and ten-month rates were 42 percent for AFDC-FG mandatory registrants. Among the early-registering AFDC-U sample members, the rates were 37 percent at six months and 40 percent at ten months.

deregistered, as well as the extent to which GAIN staff used money management or sanctions in response to those registrants who failed to participate for no good cause.

A. Deferral

The first section of this chapter demonstrated that a large proportion of registrants -- 35 percent of the mandatory AFDC-FG registrants and 28 percent of the AFDC-U registrants -- were deferred at some point during the six months following their registration. A small number of these individuals were deferred after having participated in a GAIN component. For the vast majority, however, deferral was their first "activity" in GAIN. Very few of these registrants subsequently participated in any GAIN component within the follow-up period.

As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7, casefile reviews indicated that the most common reasons for deferral included part-time employment, medically verified illness, and severe family crises. Those reviews also showed that deferral periods tended to be long, continuing for several months or more.

B. Money Management and Sanctioning

The GAIN legislation specifies two main strategies -- money management and sanctioning -- to enforce participation, as well as procedural guidelines for implementing these strategies. In the counties studied GAIN staff seldom used money management or sanctioning to enforce registrants' compliance with program regulations. As shown in Table 4.3, about 6 percent of the AFDC-FG mandatory registrants sampled were referred to money management during the six months after their registration. Most referrals to money management were cases of individuals who failed to attend an orientation. Less than 1 percent of all mandatory registrants were sanctioned.

As will be discussed in later chapters, MDRC interviews with program staff indicated that the imposition of these penalties may have become more frequent after the time period covered by these data. As the counties became more experienced in operating GAIN, they tended to rely more heavily on penalties. In addition, because of the many steps involved in the enforcement process, penalties for some registrants would not have taken effect until after the six-month follow-up period.

C. Deregistration

A substantial proportion of registrants -- 29 percent of the mandatory AFDC-FG registrants and 39 percent of the AFDC-U registrants -- were no longer required to participate in GAIN at some point during the six-month follow-up period because of normal welfare caseload behavior resulting in deregistration from the program (Table 4.3). These deregistrations were the result of registrants' leaving welfare entirely (either because they found employment or for other reasons) or of individuals' remaining on welfare but no longer being mandatory registrants, for example, because of the birth of a child.

IV. GED Receipt and Employment Rates

One of the program outcomes expected from GAIN is that registrants entering the GED preparation component of basic education will acquire GED certificates. Another is that many registrants will enter employment. The data on these two outcomes collected from casefiles reflect only occurrences that were reported to program staff and thus underestimate actual GED receipt or employment. (Many individuals leave welfare to take employment without informing their case manager. Similarly, registrants may pass a GED examination after having left GAIN.) In addition, this information is available for only a short period -- six months -- after registration. The data suggest that, overall, very few mandatory registrants (only 1 percent) received a GED certificate during the six-month follow-up period. However, this rate was much higher among those who participated in GED preparation programs, ranging from 12 percent among AFDC-FG participants to 38 percent among AFDC-U participants (see Chapter 9 for further discussion of this issue).

Casefile information also indicated that 19 percent of the AFDC-FG mandatory registrants and 26 percent of the AFDC-U registrants reported employment (part-time or full-time) within six months of registration. This includes employment leading to deregistration or deferral from GAIN, and any other employment.

V. Participation Among Voluntary Registrants

In four counties -- Napa, San Mateo, Ventura, and Santa Clara -- MDRC collected participation data for volunteers: individuals who registered for GAIN although they were not required to do so.¹¹ In most of these cases the reason the individuals did not have to register for GAIN was that they had at least one child under age 6.

A. Attendance at a GAIN Orientation or Appraisal

Table 4.3 shows six-month activity indicators for volunteers in the four counties. (Appendix Table E.4 presents the activity indicators for volunteers by county.) As shown at the top of Table 4.3, 66 percent of the volunteers had attended a GAIN orientation within six months of their registration. This proportion is slightly lower than comparable rates calculated for mandatory registrants. Many volunteers who did not attend an orientation may have experienced a change in situation or reconsidered their involvement in the program after they registered for GAIN.

Three of the four counties included in the analysis of volunteer participation patterns had orientation attendance rates of around 65 percent (Appendix Table E.4). In Napa, however, 100 percent of the volunteers attended an orientation session. This finding reflects Napa's unique registration procedures: potential volunteers were required to attend an all-day

¹¹As noted in Chapter 2, volunteers accounted for 17 percent of all individuals who registered for GAIN during the sample enrollment periods in these four counties.

orientation session and then decide whether to register for GAIN.

B. Participation in a GAIN Component

In spite of their lower orientation attendance rates, volunteers participated in post-orientation activities at a higher rate than mandatory registrants. As shown in Table 4.3, almost 45 percent of all volunteers participated in job search, education, training, or work experience activities for at least one day during the six-month period following their registration. Across counties the overall participation rates for volunteers were fairly consistent, ranging from 40 percent to 48 percent; and in three of the four counties, volunteer registrants participated at higher rates than their mandatory registrant counterparts (Table 4.4 and Appendix Table E.4).

GAIN program planners had anticipated that individuals who were already active in self-initiated education or training programs would be likely to volunteer for GAIN because the program offers child care and transportation resources. As shown in Table 4.3, almost one-quarter of the volunteers in the four counties included in the analysis were, in fact, already involved in self-initiated activities, primarily vocational training programs, before registering for GAIN. However, slightly over a quarter of the volunteers participated in program-arranged GAIN components within the six-month follow-up period: almost 12 percent participated in job search activities, generally job clubs, and almost 14 percent attended basic education courses, primarily ABE and GED programs.

As was the case with the mandatory registrants, very few volunteers (only 4 percent) reached the career assessment stage of the GAIN model within the six-month follow-up period. Their participation in post-assessment education or training, or PREP, was therefore also minimal.

C. Rates of Deferral, Deregistration, and Responses to Noncompliance

The proportion of registrants deferred at some point during the six-month follow-up period was much lower for volunteers than for mandatory registrants. Only 5 percent of the volunteers were deferred. In general, GAIN-exempt individuals who had obstacles to participation prior to orientation, such as illness or family problems, or who were employed part time probably did not volunteer for GAIN; as noted earlier, those circumstances were common reasons for deferral among the mandatory registrants. On the other hand, deregistration rates were much higher among the volunteers sampled than among the mandatory registrants. As shown earlier in Table 4.1, deregistrations accounted for two-thirds of the volunteers who attended an orientation but never participated in a post-orientation activity.

Program regulations do not allow the use of money management or sanctioning to penalize volunteers who are not complying with GAIN participation requirements. However, during the follow-up period, 5 percent of all volunteers were denied further access to GAIN services for a period of six months because of their noncompliance. (This result is shown in the "sanctioning" row of Table 4.3.)

D. GED Receipt and Employment Rates

Finally, volunteers were slightly more likely than mandatory registrants to report having received a GED certificate, and somewhat less likely to report having obtained employment, during the six-month follow-up period (Table 4.3).

VI. Summary

Several major findings were presented in this chapter showing that GAIN participation rates, while lower than anticipated, were influenced by normal welfare caseload turnover and GAIN deferral policies as well as county implementation difficulties. First, close to one-third of all GAIN registrants never made it to a program orientation, although this figure varied widely by county. A substantial proportion of those who did not attend orientation were deregistered from the program at some point during the six-month follow-up period and thus were not longer required to participate. Chapter 5 will provide more detail on reasons why some GAIN registrants never attended orientation and the steps that were taken by various counties to try to improve the attendance rate.

Second, slightly over one-third of all GAIN registrants attended an orientation and went through the appraisal process but did not go on to participate in a program component, most commonly because they were placed in a deferral status. Chapter 7 will examine how GAIN staff determined whether a registrant should be deferred, the most common reasons for deferrals, how long the deferrals typically lasted, and the methods used to monitor registrants over the course of their deferral.

Third, lower than expected orientation attendance rates, coupled with high deferral rates, reduced the number of mandatory registrants available for assignment to program components. Only one-third of all mandatory registrants attended a GAIN orientation and went on to participate in a program component over the six-month follow-up period. Data using a longer follow-up period, available for a small proportion of the sample members, suggested that almost all registrants who eventually participated in GAIN did so within six months of their registration; few began participating after that point. Participation was more concentrated in basic education programs than in job search activities, representing a departure from most previous welfare employment programs.

Overall, the disposition of most cases was generally consistent with GAIN's policies. By the end of six months after their referral to GAIN, over three-quarters of all mandatory registrants at some point had either participated or were not required to do so.

Chapter 6 will present more detailed data on the extent to which individuals participated in GAIN on a continuous basis and the order in which registrants typically proceeded through the program model. Chapter 8 will describe the case management practices adopted by counties to keep track of registrants' activities in various program components and how staff reacted when registrants failed to participate in assigned components. Chapters 9 and 10 will discuss the eight

counties' experiences in delivering basic education, job search, and other education and training services, as well as the nature of those services.

CHAPTER 5

GETTING TO ORIENTATION

This chapter explores the experiences of welfare recipients between the time they were registered for GAIN and the time they either attended or should have attended a GAIN orientation. It also examines staff practices at this stage of the program. GAIN staff and administrators estimated that more than half of all registrants did not attend their first scheduled orientation session and, as shown in Chapter 4, nearly a third of all mandatory registrants never appeared at an orientation within six months of their registration.

The chapter examines three possible explanations to account for the proportion of registrants who attended orientation and how soon they attended after registration. First, based on previous research of the welfare population,¹ it can be expected that some individuals will leave welfare, find jobs, or for other reasons not be continuously subject to GAIN's participation requirement. Thus, welfare caseload dynamics and the role of GAIN deregistration and deferral policies are important to consider in understanding why rates of orientation attendance were not 100 percent in all counties. Second, the ways in which the welfare eligibility workers explain and promote GAIN -- both its obligations and opportunities -- to individuals when they register for the program can affect registrants' understanding of and enthusiasm for it, and, in turn, their likelihood of participating. Third, the methods used to schedule orientations and the practices of GAIN staff in response to nonattendance can also affect the rate at which registrants show up at orientation.

The chapter begins by discussing county differences in the rates at which registrants attended orientation and the speed at which they attended. The next section presents data on the extent to which deregistration from the program or temporary deferral occurred in lieu of orientation attendance. This is followed by a discussion of how welfare eligibility workers communicated GAIN's opportunities and requirements to individuals at registration. The fourth section describes how scheduling and notification practices affected orientation attendance patterns. Finally, the chapter examines how program staff responded to registrants who missed their scheduled orientations and considers the effect of these efforts on subsequent orientation attendance.

The results presented in this chapter derive from field interviews with eligibility workers and GAIN administrators and staff; from casefile reviews of registrants' activities in GAIN; from the MDRC survey of line staff; and, in three counties, from AFDC grant payment records. Most of the quantitative analyses do not include results from Fresno because complete data on

¹Bane and Elwood (1983).

orientation attendance was not available during the study period.²

I. Orientation Attendance Patterns

In most counties registrants were scheduled to attend an orientation within two weeks of their registration. Allowing time for rescheduling registrants who missed their initial appointments, it is reasonable to expect that most registrants should have attended an orientation within 60 days. Among mandatory registrants, caseload data indicate that just over one-half -- 54 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants and 57 percent of the AFDC-U registrants -- did attend within that amount of time.³ An additional 16 percent of AFDC-FG mandatory registrants and 13 percent of AFDC-U registrants attended during the next four months. However, nearly one-third of all mandatory registrants had not attended an orientation by the end of the six-month post-registration period, as discussed in the previous chapter.⁴

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show that the counties differed in how soon after registration individuals attended an orientation, and in the rate of attendance achieved by the end of the follow-up period. In four counties the vast majority of registrants attended orientation within two months of registration, ranging from at least 76 percent of AFDC-FG mandatory registrants in Kern, Stanislaus, and Ventura to about 93 percent in Napa. Indeed, in these counties, most registrants who attended orientation did so within the first 30 days, and very few additional registrants showed up after 60 days.

In the remaining three counties -- Butte, San Mateo, and Santa Clara -- a noticeably smaller proportion of mandatory registrants attended orientation within two months: among AFDC-FG registrants the rates ranged from 31 percent in Santa Clara to 57 percent in Butte. Although these three counties had achieved attendance rates of over 50 percent by the end of six months, they still had not reached the levels that the other four counties had achieved within only 30 days of registration. Thus, in counties where GAIN did not reach individuals quickly, many were unlikely to attend orientation even at a later time. One reason for this is that by the end of the follow-up period many registrants who had not attended orientation were not required to participate in GAIN because of deregistration and, to a lesser extent, deferral.

²See Chapter 2 for discussion of data sources used for this analysis.

³Orientation attendance rates for the entire sample are weighted to reflect county caseload sizes. Because Santa Clara had the largest caseload in the study and low orientation attendance rates, it depressed the overall average and gives the impression that nonattendance was more general across counties than it was.

⁴An examination of a limited set of registrant characteristics revealed few demographic groups that were less likely than others to attend an orientation within six months of registration. In general, younger registrants were less likely to attend orientations than older individuals. In addition, AFDC-U applicants were slightly less likely to attend than AFDC-U recipients. However, no other differences were apparent in terms of sex, ethnicity, primary language, or prior AFDC dependency.

FIGURE 5.1
CUMULATIVE ORIENTATION ATTENDANCE RATES
FOR AFDC-FG MANDATORY REGISTRANTS,
BY COUNTY

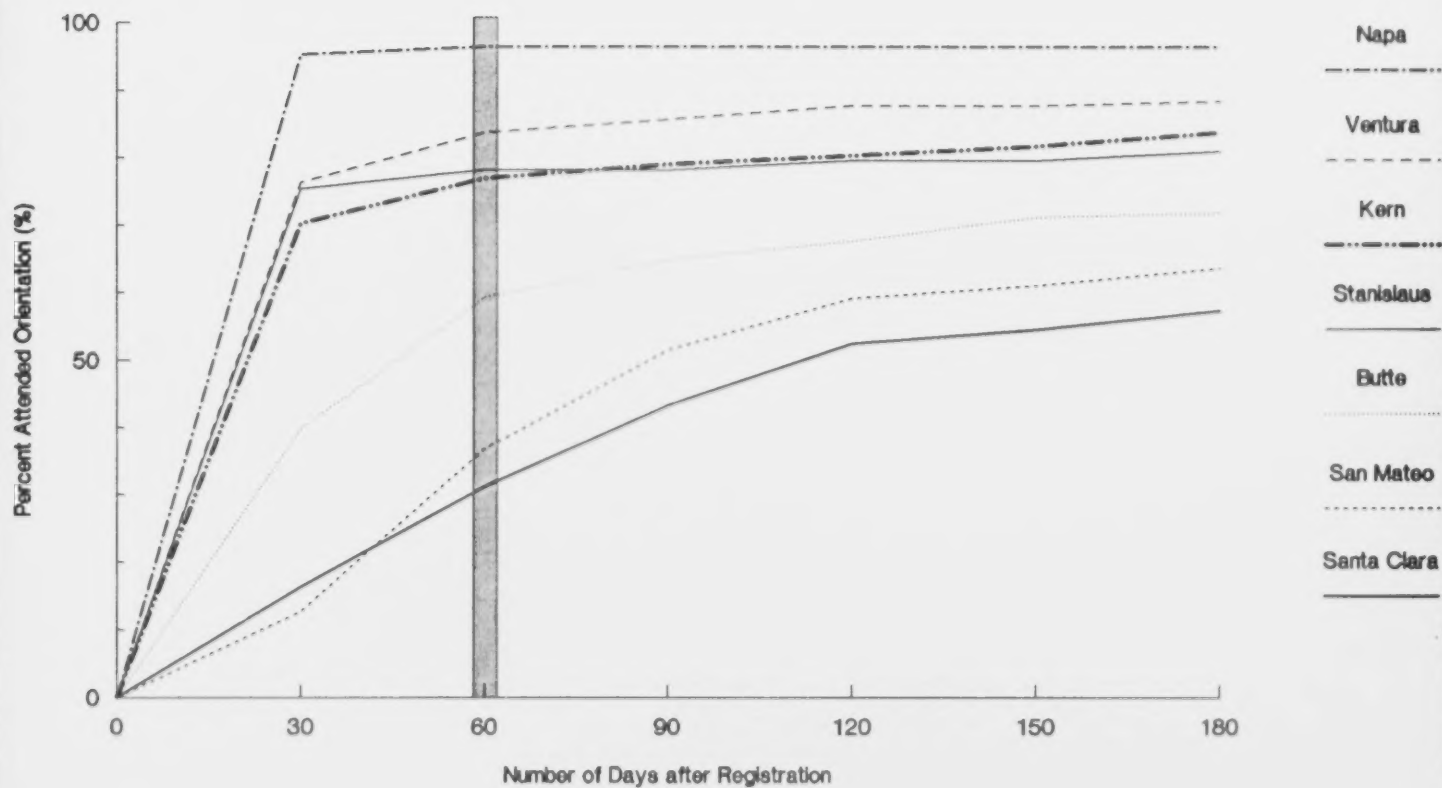
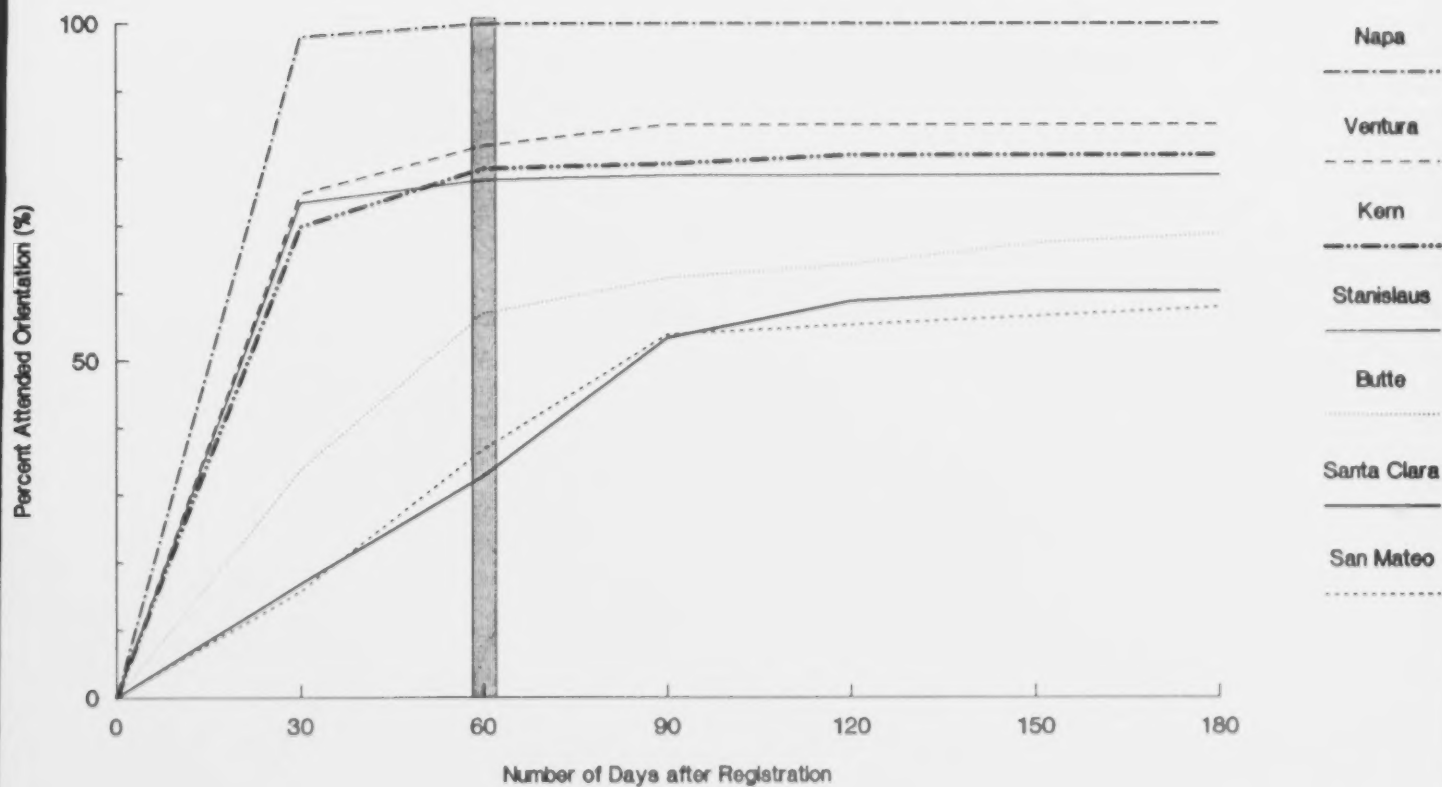


FIGURE 5.2
CUMULATIVE ORIENTATION ATTENDANCE RATES
FOR AFDC-U MANDATORY REGISTRANTS,
BY COUNTY



II. Changes in the Program Status of Mandatory Registrants

Figure 5.3 shows the program statuses of mandatory registrants within two and six months of registration. Among AFDC-FG registrants, 54 percent attended orientation, 5 percent were deregistered, and 4 percent were deferred within two months.⁵ Thus, 37 percent were not accounted for by one of these three "legitimate" GAIN statuses. By the end of six months, the proportion of registrants attending orientation and the proportion deregistered increased substantially. Consequently, only 15 percent of all registrants were not accounted for by one of the three program statuses by that time and, therefore, were potentially still available to attend orientation.

In all but one county, over 90 percent of the mandatory registrants were oriented, deregistered, or deferred within six months of registration. Four counties -- Napa, Ventura, Kern, and Stanislaus -- achieved this rate within two months of registration and increased it to 97 percent or more within six months. In two other counties -- San Mateo and Butte -- most registrants were also in one of these three statuses, but not within the first two months of their registration.⁶ (See Appendix Tables F.1 and F.2.)

Only in Santa Clara did a substantial number of registrants remain unaccounted for at the end of six months following their registration. For example, only 67 percent of AFDC-FG mandatory registrants had attended an orientation or been deregistered or deferred within this period. To a large extent, this outcome can be explained by the fact that GAIN planners in Santa Clara had not anticipated the extent to which registrants would not show up at their scheduled orientations, and had not initially developed any special procedures for working with no-shows. Shortly after GAIN began, the county sought to enroll individuals into the program as quickly as possible. These efforts were especially intense during a three-month period known locally as "the blitz," when staff spent a great deal of time scheduling registrants for orientations, and comparatively little time following up on those who did not attend. This resulted in a very large backlog of nonattenders. It was not until the second year of implementation that the county assembled the resources necessary to apply enforcement procedures on a more consistent and timely basis and began to address its backlog of registrants.

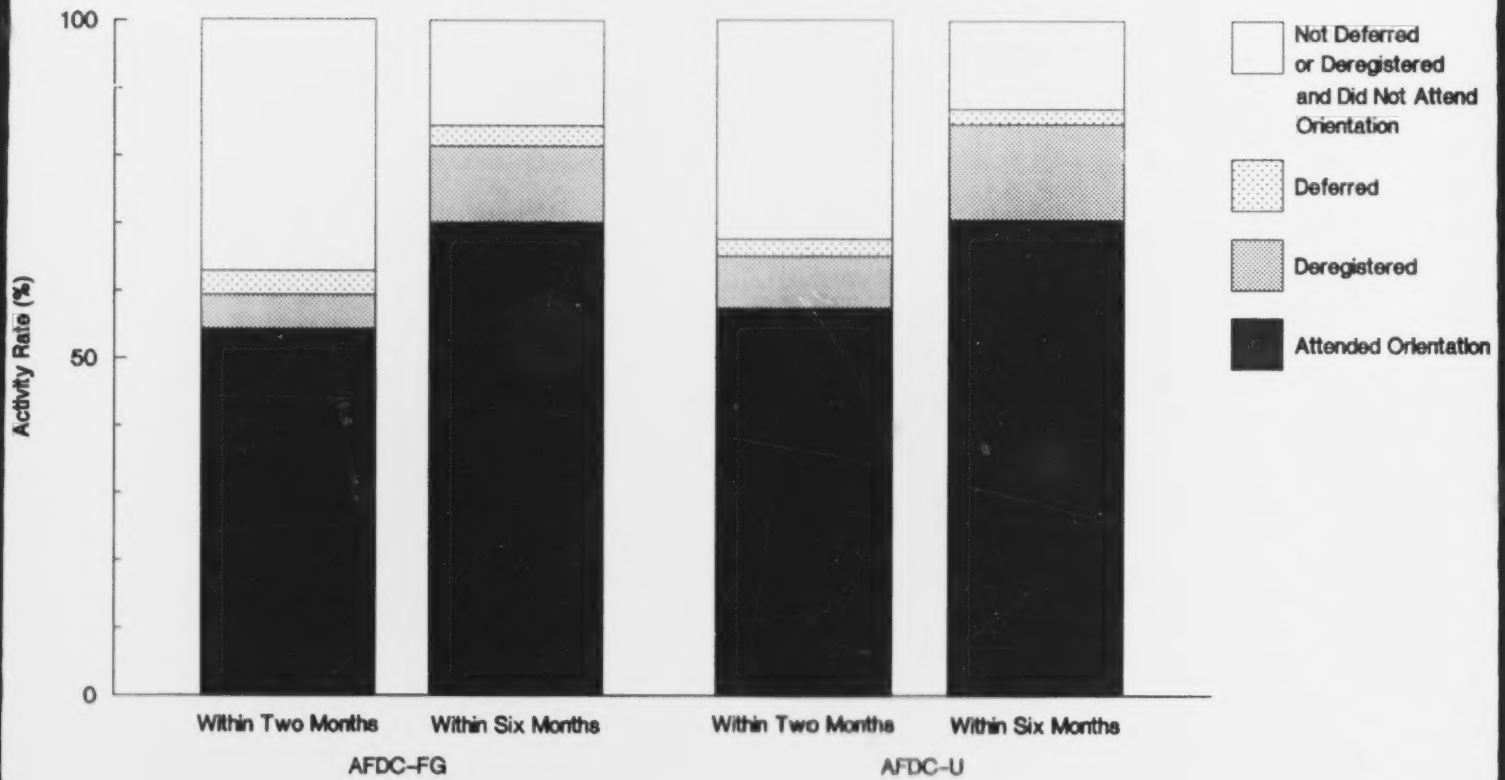
Across all counties, some orientation nonattenders who deregistered from GAIN left welfare altogether. The extent to which this occurred was measured in three counties -- Ventura, Kern,

⁵Reasons for deregistration were usually not recorded in registrants' casefiles. GAIN status forms (GAIN-27s) allow case managers to code deregistrations as being due to employment, sanction, or "other reasons." About 80 percent of deregistrations recorded by MDRC researchers were coded as due to "other reasons." Undoubtedly, a higher percentage of registrants found jobs but did not report them to their case managers.

⁶For example, as shown in Appendix Table F.1, the proportion of registrants in Napa who were oriented, deferred, or deregistered within two and within six months after registration changed very little, while in San Mateo and Butte it changed considerably.

FIGURE 5.3

PROGRAM STATUS OF MANDATORY REGISTRANTS
WITHIN TWO AND SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION



and Santa Clara -- where MDRC collected additional GAIN casefile and AFDC payment records. These data show that among AFDC-FG mandatory registrants who had neither attended orientation nor been deferred within two months of registration, between 9 percent (in Santa Clara) and 35 percent (in Kern) left welfare during the follow-up period (Table 5.1). Put differently, among those who deregistered in these counties, approximately one-third to almost three-quarters had left welfare. In all three counties, the majority of AFDC-U nonattenders who deregistered had left welfare. Very few, if any, of these case closures can be attributed to sanctions, which were rarely imposed during the study period.

Although the majority of registrants in most of the study counties did attend an orientation or were otherwise accounted for within six months of registration, many failed to attend their initial orientation appointments. In discussions with MDRC field researchers, GAIN administrators and staff reported that the percentage of registrants who failed to show up at each scheduled orientation varied from 30 to 70 percent, but in most counties it was reportedly above 50 percent. These low initial attendance rates were a major concern, because the programs had to invest considerable staff time and resources to contact nonattenders, determine whether they were still required to participate in GAIN, reschedule orientations, and try to convince registrants to attend. Low attendance rates at scheduled orientations also slowed the process of getting registrants through appraisal and into GAIN activities, which created problems for program planners and, in some cases, strained relationships with service providers. The remainder of this chapter describes some of the factors that are likely to have contributed to these low initial orientation rates. It also discusses staff responses to nonattendance and changes in county procedures to try to improve attendance.

III. Informing Registrants About GAIN at Registration

When MDRC field researchers asked GAIN administrators and staff why so many registrants missed their initially scheduled orientations, many responded by claiming that a portion of GAIN registrants were long-time AFDC recipients who were not used to "applying themselves" in an employment or training activity designed to get them off welfare; others were afraid of having to leave their children with caretakers while participating in GAIN activities; some did not want to go back to school; and some were afraid that GAIN would force them to accept a job that paid less than welfare. Staff also reported that even registrants who did attend orientation often arrived knowing relatively little about the program.⁷

These staff perceptions are probably explained partly by the ways in which GAIN's opportunities and obligations were presented to individuals at the time they were registered for the program. This section describes what registrants learned about the program at the income maintenance offices, as well as some of the strategies GAIN staff developed to improve the referral process.

⁷Ventura, for example, took its own survey of orientation nonattenders and concluded that the most common problem was that people did not think they had to attend.

TABLE 3.1

PERCENT OF DEREGISTRATIONS FROM GAIN AND EXITS FROM AFDC
AMONG A SAMPLE OF ORIENTATION NONATTENDERS,
BY ASSISTANCE CATEGORY AND COUNTY

GAIN Status	Ventura	Kern	Santa Clara
<u>AFDC-FG Mandatory Registrants</u>			
Deregistered	66.7%	60.9%	12.5%
Off AFDC ^a	20.8	34.8	8.8
<u>AFDC-U Mandatory Registrants</u>			
Deregistered	77.3	92.6	12.3
Off AFDC ^a	72.7	55.6	8.6
<u>Sample Size</u>			
AFDC-FG Mandatory Registrants	24	23	80
AFDC-U Mandatory Registrants	22	27	81

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who did not attend orientation nor were deferred within two months of registration.

NOTES: The order in which the three counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Of the three counties, Ventura had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

^a"Off AFDC" is defined as having two or more consecutive months without an AFDC payment within the first seven months of registration. Six registrants went off AFDC but were not deregistered from GAIN. Most likely, this occurred because of missing deregistration records or slow communication between Income Maintenance and GAIN staff.

A. Referring Registrants to GAIN

Individuals are usually registered for GAIN when they go to an income maintenance office to apply for welfare or to take part in an annual redetermination of their welfare eligibility. At these meetings, eligibility workers process applications for welfare, calculate AFDC grant levels, and determine whether individuals are mandatory for GAIN. They then register individuals for the program, provide a brief explanation of it, and (in most counties) schedule registrants for a GAIN orientation. GAIN registration represents the welfare department's first opportunity to educate recipients about the program.

Table 5.2 describes the referral behavior reported by eligibility workers on a survey conducted roughly a year after their counties had initiated GAIN. The workers sampled reported spending an average of ten minutes referring mandatory registrants to GAIN, and even less time referring volunteers. Moreover, in most counties, fewer than half of the workers sampled reported that they strongly believed that their role was to make GAIN mandatory registrants enthusiastic about the program. Only 10 percent of eligibility workers indicated that they believed their agency wanted them to urge exempt registrants "very strongly" to volunteer for GAIN and only 15 percent believed that workers put "much effort" into this task. The survey results also indicate that eligibility workers were more likely to discuss GAIN's participation obligations than the program's education and training opportunities and support services.

In field interviews, GAIN administrators and staff asserted that few eligibility workers knew much about GAIN and therefore did not present the program very well. On the survey, the eligibility workers generally concurred with this assessment, as shown in Table 5.3. Only 17 percent of those surveyed reported that they and their colleagues were "very knowledgeable" about GAIN. And as one worker interviewed by a field researcher stated, "I try not to give a description. The program is so vast. I tell them the GAIN office will explain it to them." In one county MDRC field researchers asked seven eligibility workers what services new GAIN participants were most likely to receive; no one knew.⁸

Perhaps because they were not very knowledgeable about GAIN, eligibility workers were

⁸Moreover, a number of GAIN staff complained that many of those eligibility workers who were trying to promote GAIN were confused about the program and often misinformed or misled registrants. For example, they often stressed the availability of job training, which may have led registrants to develop unrealistic expectations about available services. In contrast, a recently promoted case manager who said that when she had been an eligibility worker, she (and other eligibility workers) thought GAIN was only a job search program and did not realize that an array of services were available. Some eligibility workers interviewed also indicated a lack of knowledge about support services available for GAIN participants. For instance, one eligibility worker described what she told registrants about support services: "I say it will help you but not pay all of it, just some money towards child care and transportation."

TABLE 5.2
REFERRAL BEHAVIOR OF ELIGIBILITY WORKERS,
BY COUNTY

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Total
Average Time Spent Making Referral For Non-Exempt Registrant (Minutes)	14.7	9.9	8.3	8.6	7.9	9.2	10.7	12.6	10.0
Average Time Spent Making Referral For Exempt Registrant (Minutes)	11.3	6.0	3.6	5.6	3.9	3.8	5.1	7.6	5.5
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:									
EW's are supposed to "very strongly" urge volunteers to enter GAIN	69%	11%	0%	7%	6%	4%	8%	8%	10%
They put "much effort" into urging volunteers to participate in GAIN	69	44	13	17	3	11	10	3	15
They "very often" discuss rules that determine whether clients are mandatory participants during eligibility interviews	88	89	90	59	58	57	73	81	72
They "very often" discuss registrants' GAIN responsibilities during the eligibility interview	63	89	70	45	35	26	58	76	55
They "very often" discuss GAIN activities and support services that clients are entitled to during the eligibility interview	75	56	37	24	18	18	25	54	34
They "very often" discuss the current availability of GAIN activities and support services with clients during the eligibility interview	56	44	17	28	9	14	5	41	22
They "very often" give advice to clients about how to get GAIN services during the eligibility interview	50	44	17	21	9	11	20	32	22

(continued)

TABLE 5.2 (continued)

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Total
They "very often" give advice to clients about the value of services during the eligibility interview	44%	44%	17%	14%	0%	7%	15%	32%	18%
EW's are "very strongly" supposed to make mandatory registrants enthusiastic about GAIN	88	33	33	41	33	37	38	51	43
They put "much effort" into making mandatory registrants enthusiastic about GAIN	94	44	47	48	21	29	36	33	40
Sample Size	16	9	30	29	34	28	41	37	224

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes a random subsample of eligibility workers from all eight counties.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix D, questions H3A, H3B, H5A, H5B, H5C, H5D, H5E, H5F, H8, H9, H10, H11.

^a"EW's" stands for "eligibility workers."

TABLE 5.3

ELIGIBILITY WORKERS' KNOWLEDGE OF AND
ATTITUDES TOWARD GAIN, BY COUNTY

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Total
<u>Knowledge of GAIN</u>									
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:									
EW's ^a _{a,b} "Very Knowledgeable" about GAIN ^{a,b}	19%	22%	17%	17%	15%	11%	20%	---	17%
They Attended a Training Session about GAIN ^{b,c}	47	57	93	79	37	68	53	---	64
<u>Attitudes Toward GAIN:</u>									
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:									
"Strongly agree" that someone who wants to get off of welfare can get a lot of help from worker's agency	80	25	25	34	33	29	20	34	32
They feel that GAIN services can give clients "considerable help" in getting off welfare	88	44	30	21	26	25	32	16	30
They feel that GAIN services can give clients "considerable help" in feeling better about themselves	88	44	47	21	33	36	30	24	36
They feel "strongly" that they have something positive ^b to offer clients because of GAIN	69	75	53	38	30	41	37	---	44

(continued)

TABLE 5.3 (continued)

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Total
<u>The Eligibility Worker's Workload</u>									
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:									
The job of the EW has been "substantially" affected by GAIN ^{a,b}	67%	78%	24%	46%	31%	27%	25%	---	36%
The job of the EW has been "much" harder under GAIN ^{a,b}	47	67	25	39	13	42	31	---	34
GAIN has made the paperwork "much" harder ^b	47	56	33	28	36	37	32	---	35
The job of the EW has been "much" more satisfying under GAIN ^{a,b}	60	25	19	15	14	9	12	---	19
Sample Size	16	9	30	29	34	28	41	37	224

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes a random subsample of eligibility workers from each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix D, questions A25, B6A, B6B, G1, G2A, K1, K2, K3, K4, and K5.

^a "EW" stands for "eligibility worker."

^b Eligibility workers in Fresno and seven eligibility workers in Kern were not asked this question.

^c Percentages for this variable report staff who answered "yes."

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cautious in their attitudes about the program. As shown in Table 5.3, only 44 percent "strongly agreed" that GAIN gave them something positive to offer registrants.⁹ Most eligibility workers were more neutral and seemed to have a "wait and see" attitude. About a third of the workers surveyed strongly believed that GAIN could offer registrants considerable help in getting off welfare.

In summary, eligibility workers in most counties were not well informed about GAIN and tended not to promote the program to registrants. (Those in Napa were an exception, as discussed below.) This finding suggests that the referral practices of eligibility workers probably do not account for much of the variation in orientation attendance rates across the counties studied. It does not imply, however, that counties should abandon efforts to improve eligibility workers' presentation of GAIN services and obligations. During the period covered by this report, there were not enough counties where eligibility workers strongly promoted the program to determine the effect of these presentations on orientation attendance rates.¹⁰ Nevertheless, staff and registrants might benefit from a strengthening of communications between GAIN and income maintenance staff for the purpose of better educating new registrants about the types of services that GAIN can provide and encouraging them to become involved in the program.

B. Reasons for Not Promoting GAIN

According to GAIN administrators and staff, several aspects of eligibility workers' job descriptions and the way their job performance was evaluated did not provide an incentive to spend much time motivating registrants to show up for GAIN. Traditionally, eligibility workers' main task has been to collect the detailed data used to determine registrants' AFDC eligibility. Working with large caseloads, workers must do this quickly. They know that income maintenance supervisors monitor their work closely to insure that AFDC eligibility decisions are accurate and that benefits are calculated correctly. (Federal and state regulations set limits on the percentage of incorrect AFDC eligibility decisions and penalize counties that exceed those limits.) Income maintenance administrators in the counties studied did not monitor eligibility workers' referral of registrants to GAIN. "If they forget to explain GAIN, nobody ever knows," an income maintenance supervisor pointed out to a field researcher.

⁹During field interviews, eligibility workers who expressed positive feelings toward GAIN tended to stress the new resources and opportunities available to registrants. As one eligibility worker put it, "I think it is a really good chance. They pay for your childcare and you can go to school. Sometimes I get a client who calls who wants to work and I say try GAIN, then by the time your child is in school, you can make something of yourself."

¹⁰On questions about the frequency with which eligibility workers discussed participation requirements or placements and services, county averages vary considerably. Further, they do not fall into a neat pattern in which counties that are more likely to stress attendance requirements have the highest initial attendance rates, or in which counties that are more likely to stress GAIN placements and services have the highest rates.

Furthermore, in most counties, if a registrant did not attend an orientation, GAIN staff, not eligibility workers, were responsible for tracing the registrant. A failed referral did not add to the eligibility worker's workload. Finally, 36 percent of the eligibility workers surveyed reported that they had received no training in GAIN (Table 5.3), while the others attended an average of 1.7 training sessions.¹¹

C. Improving Relationships Between GAIN and Income Maintenance Staffs

In some counties GAIN administrators tried to improve communication channels with income maintenance staff. For example, they developed new staff training programs, created GAIN liaison positions staffed by people with income maintenance experience, trained the GAIN staff in income maintenance policies and procedures, had GAIN staff attend eligibility unit staff meetings, and tried to insure that eligibility workers know at least one GAIN case manager whom they can contact for information.

Napa provides one example of how better relationships can be developed. The GAIN office in Napa invited eligibility workers to breakfast meetings, had them attend a GAIN orientation and tour GAIN's facilities, and sent them newsletters that included GAIN success stories.

Napa's work with the income maintenance unit is reflected in the survey responses of eligibility workers presented on Tables 5.2 and 5.3. Whereas only 19 percent of all eligibility workers reported that GAIN had made their work more satisfying, the figure in Napa was 60 percent. Likewise, 94 percent of eligibility workers in Napa agreed that they "should put much effort" into making mandatory registrants enthusiastic, over twice the average for eligibility workers across the counties. Other counties, such as Ventura, began using similar techniques, but too late for any results to be reflected in the staff survey.

IV. GAIN Staff Scheduling and Notification Practices

Once registrants leave the income maintenance office, their attendance at a GAIN orientation becomes a matter for the GAIN staff to oversee. Local GAIN programs varied in the way they notified registrants of scheduled orientations, the amount of interactions their staff had with registrants before orientation and the staff's propensity to grant pre-orientation deferrals.

¹¹For the actual wording for the survey question, see Appendix D, question G4b. One exception is Napa. In Napa, eligibility workers had to call and reschedule registrants who missed an orientation; thus, they had an incentive to get the registrant to show up the first time. The results in Fresno are also of interest because eligibility workers contacted nonattenders and monitored registrants in basic education. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 show that they did discuss more about GAIN with registrants than eligibility workers in other large counties, but they were no different in their effort to make mandatory registrants enthusiastic or in their own attitudes toward GAIN.

A. Delays in Scheduling and Notification

Scheduling practices can influence the rates at which registrants attend orientation. In particular, longer delays in scheduling registrants for orientations increase the chances that they will deregister from the program prior to attending. This is best illustrated by San Mateo's experience, where attendance rates were lower than in many of the other counties, and where the proportion of registrants deregistered and deferred between two and six months after orientation increased more sharply. (See Figure 5.1 and Appendix Table F.1.)

In part, these delays in San Mateo were due to the county's procedure of scheduling individuals for orientation only after GAIN data clerks had received their registration forms and entered the information into the county's automated record system. Registrants were then sent a computer-generated letter indicating the time and place of the orientation. During the period studied by MDRC, this process worked slowly because San Mateo did not have enough data clerks to keep up with the flow of registration forms. Thus, several weeks could pass before registrants were first scheduled for orientation.

Only one other county -- Butte -- notified registrants of scheduled orientations by mail, rather than during registration at the income maintenance office. This practice may also have contributed to Butte's notably lower attendance rate within two months of orientation.¹²

B. Special Efforts in Notifying Registrants

To get more registrants to attend their initially scheduled orientation, several counties experimented with ways to reach them prior to that meeting. Napa, the county with the highest attendance rate, organized a separate outreach unit of staff who telephoned or visited registrants before their scheduled orientations. In these encounters the staff took the opportunity to help registrants solve transportation or child care problems.

GAIN staff in two counties began calling registrants the night before their scheduled orientations. Reports on the efficacy of this practice for increasing orientation attendance were mixed.

Four counties instituted procedures to facilitate early deferrals from GAIN and thus identify those who may not be appropriate for GAIN orientation. In Napa, Stanislaus and San Mateo, where registrants completed part of the GAIN appraisal at registration, GAIN clerks were instructed to refer likely candidates for deferrals to a GAIN staff member who could grant these immediately. In Kern, GAIN staff could also grant deferrals during pre-orientation meetings.

¹²MDRC field researchers reported that GAIN staff often discovered deregistrations when contacting eligibility workers about orientation nonattenders. It is likely that GAIN staff in San Mateo and Butte were following up with nonattenders slowly, and when they checked with the eligibility workers, they often found that a registrant had deregistered from GAIN.

In Stanislaus this procedure led to a relatively high rate of initial deferrals: about 11 percent of AFDC-FG mandatory registrants (Appendix Table F.1). Kern and San Mateo also deferred a somewhat higher than average percentage of these registrants within the first two months of the follow-up period. But, despite their granting of early deferrals, both Kern and Stanislaus had relatively high rates of orientation attendance within two months of registration (although San Mateo did not), which suggests that, under some circumstances, quickly deferring registrants unlikely to participate in GAIN may help to speed up the process of bringing other individuals into GAIN.

V. GAIN Staff Responses to Nonattenders

Because so many registrants did not attend their first scheduled orientation, follow-up procedures became a serious concern of GAIN administrators in the counties studied. Initially, many of the counties had no procedures for responding to no-shows. In many cases the staff had not anticipated a problem. As one administrator said, "Everyone was so focused on what a wonderful opportunity this was for clients that no one considered the possibility that they might resist participating." In one county GAIN staff were reluctant to use enforcement procedures. As an administrator there explained:

This is a liberal county that was never going to be punitive. We were going to show that that wasn't the way to go. That's why conciliation wasn't implemented until months and months later.

In another county, an administrator told a similar story:

We were going to run a consensual program and at least for the first year we were not going to use sanctions. We were bending over backwards not to use them. Now there has been a change and we are more strongly emphasizing the client's obligations.

In some cases the workload early in GAIN's implementation also delayed the planning and use of enforcement procedures. For example, one administrator reported there was so much to do that working with the willing registrants was the first priority. Finally, some counties gave GAIN staff wide discretion in managing their caseloads, and it was not until the no-show rate became apparent that the administrators instituted stricter enforcement guidelines.

A. Formal and Informal Strategies

The formal procedures available for enforcing orientation attendance are the same as those used to enforce participation in GAIN components. (These are described in Chapter 8.) Registrants missing orientation are to receive a Problem Participation Notice (a GAIN-22 form) that recognizes their absence and instructs them to contact the GAIN office for a "cause determination" within 10 days or face possible loss of control over their monthly welfare check.

Continued noncompliance without good cause is supposed to result in referral of registrants to money management, a penalty in which a third party receives the registrant's welfare check and pays the registrant's bills. (Instituting this penalty requires coordination with the income maintenance unit.) Finally, registrants still not in compliance can have their welfare grants reduced or terminated. Other responses include automatic rescheduling of orientation appointments, as well as telephone calls and home visits to try to persuade registrants to participate.

Although the enforcement procedures specified in the GAIN legislation are uniform, counties used these procedures and staffed the effort in different ways. Napa and Santa Clara administrators created a limited number of specialist positions to help enforce orientation attendance. In other counties, the case managers were responsible for following up with registrants on their own ongoing caseload who were nonattenders.

GAIN staff in the counties with the lowest registrant-staff ratios (San Mateo, Butte, and Napa) were more likely to employ informal procedures to convince nonattenders to come into the program. GAIN staff reported that nonattenders were automatically rescheduled for an orientation and received notification of the next appointment without a threat of possible referral to money management. Formal enforcement strategies (including sending a Problem Participation Notice and referring a registrant to money management) were usually begun only after a second missed appointment. And case managers often continued trying to reach nonattenders through letters, telephone calls, or home visits.¹³ These findings suggest that recurring contacts could extend over several weeks before the registrant attended an orientation or was deregistered or deferred. Consequently, these practices help to explain why San Mateo and Butte had a relatively larger percentage of registrants who entered one of these three statuses only after the first two months following their registration (Appendix Tables F.1 and F.2).

By contrast, GAIN staff in Ventura, Kern, and Stanislaus reported that they usually sent a Problem Participation Notice first and then attempted to work informally with the registrant. During the period under study, Santa Clara staff also decided to send these notices to nonattenders immediately following their missed orientation session.¹⁴ However, because of the large number of registrants being scheduled for orientation, county staff were unable to track many of these nonattenders, as discussed previously.

B. Frequency of Using Formal Enforcement Procedures

The relative frequency of using formal enforcement procedures by issuing Problem

¹³Case managers in Butte were allowed to conduct individual orientations during their visits to nonattenders' homes.

¹⁴Staff from the "no-show unit" in Santa Clara estimated that 85 percent to 90 percent of registrants who had missed their first scheduled orientation did not respond to these notices.

Participation Notices and referring registrants to money management prior to orientation, and registrants' responses to these procedures, are presented in Table 5.4. (Napa is not included on that table since it used these procedures for very few people in the research sample. Sanctioning rates are also not included because they were rarely invoked during the available follow-up period.) The table shows that very few mandatory registrants -- only about 4 percent of all AFDC-FG registrants -- had attended orientation within two months of registration only after receiving a Problem Participation Notice. (Most attended without being sent such a notice.) A somewhat higher proportion -- 10 percent of the AFDC-FG sample -- did not attend orientation within two months even though they had received a Problem Participation Notice.

The counties varied in their propensity to use formal enforcement procedures in response to nonattendance. Examining the third and fourth rows of Table 5.4 reveals, for example, that in Ventura 79 percent of AFDC-FG mandatory registrants (12.8 divided by 16.2) who did not attend orientation within two months were sent Problem Participation Notices compared with only 3 percent (1.4 divided by 42.7) in Butte. Notably, the counties with the lowest registrant-staff ratios (Napa, San Mateo, and Butte) were least likely to use these procedures, favoring more informal approaches in responding to nonattendance.

Some evidence indicates that counties differed in the frequency with which GAIN staff interacted with nonattenders and coordinated enforcement procedures with income maintenance staff. These issues were investigated as part of the special study of nonattenders in three counties. In Kern and Ventura, two of the counties that relied heavily on more formal procedures, GAIN staff had contact with at least 70 percent of nonattenders, while their counterparts in Santa Clara, which used neither formal nor informal efforts at very high rates during the first year of implementation, contacted only about a third of their nonattenders. The bottom panel of Table 5.5 indicates that in Kern and Ventura no more than 6 percent of nonattenders had been left uncontacted by either GAIN staff or eligibility workers, while 67 percent of these registrants in Santa Clara had not been contacted by either type of staff.

It is also notable that a review of GAIN casefiles for this special sample of nonattenders revealed that almost three-quarters of the casefiles did not include explanations of why these individuals had missed their scheduled orientations. This suggests that GAIN staff were generally unaware of most nonattenders' individual situations.¹⁵

¹⁵Among registrants for whom reasons were available, the highest percentage (over half) claimed that they were not GAIN-mandatory, because of employment, leaving AFDC, or other reasons. In fact, most registrants in this category did leave the program within six months of registration. Other reasons include personal problems (illness, family crises, transportation or child care problems) and communication problems between case managers and registrants (e.g., inadequate information concerning the date, location, or necessity of attending orientation). It is interesting to note that most of the registrants who cited personal problems or lack of proper notification eventually attended orientation.

TABLE 5.4

PERCENT OF REGISTRANTS WHO WERE SENT A PROBLEM PARTICIPATION NOTICE
OR REFERRED TO MONEY MANAGEMENT, BY DATE OF ORIENTATION ATTENDANCE,
ASSISTANCE CATEGORY, AND COUNTY

	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
<u>AFDC-FG Mandatory Registrants</u>							
Attended Orientation Within Two Months of Registration	36.9%	57.3%	83.8%	75.7%	78.3%	30.5%	65.1%
Was Sent a Problem Notice ^a	0.0	0.7	10.1	3.4	7.7	3.5	3.6
Did Not Attend Orientation Within Two Months of Registration	63.1	42.7	16.2	24.3	21.7	69.5	34.9
Was Sent a Problem Notice ^a	14.6	1.4	12.8	10.1	11.9	19.9	10.3
Referred to Money Management ^b	6.4	0.7	5.4	0.7	3.5	5.7	3.3
<u>AFDC-U Mandatory Registrants</u>							
Attended Orientation Within Two Months of Registration	35.5	55.2	81.9	77.9	76.8	32.8	65.7
Was Sent a Problem Notice ^a	0.0	0.0	3.9	4.7	9.3	1.5	2.8
Did Not Attend Orientation Within Two Months of Registration	64.5	44.8	18.1	22.1	23.2	67.2	34.3
Was Sent a Problem Notice ^a	5.3	1.3	14.2	11.4	13.2	8.4	7.7
Referred to Money Management ^b	3.9	0.6	3.9	1.3	3.3	3.8	2.5
<u>Sample Size</u>							
AFDC-FG Mandatory Registrants	157	143	148	148	143	141	966
AFDC-U Mandatory Registrants	76	154	127	149	151	131	838

SOURCE: MDRC's participant flow sample.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Napa does not appear on the table because nearly all individuals in Napa attended orientation within two months of registration.

^a Only instances in which Problem Participation Notices were sent prior to attendance at orientation are included. If date of orientation attendance was missing, date of appraisal or start of first GAIN activity was substituted.

^b Only instances of referral to money management status which occurred prior to attendance at orientation are included. If date of orientation attendance was missing, date of appraisal or start of first GAIN activity was substituted.

TABLE 5.5

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CONTACTS AMONG GAIN CASE MANAGERS,
ELIGIBILITY WORKERS, AND ORIENTATION NONATTENDERS,
BY PARTIES INVOLVED AND COUNTY

Parties Involved and Number of Contacts	Ventura	Kern	Santa Clara
Total Number of Contacts Between Registrant and Case Manager:			
0 Contacts	19.6%	30.0%	67.7%
1 Contact	39.1	34.0	10.6
2 Contacts	15.2	18.0	9.9
3 or More Contacts	26.1	18.0	11.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Contacts Between Case Manager and Eligibility Worker:			
0 Contacts	28.3	24.0	88.8
1 Contact	26.1	60.0	8.7
2 Contacts	15.2	10.0	2.5
3 or More Contacts	30.4	6.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Contacts Between Registrant, Case Manager, and Eligibility Worker:			
0 Contacts	4.3	6.0	67.1
1 Contact	13.0	18.0	8.1
2 Contacts	19.6	26.0	9.3
3 or More Contacts	63.0	50.0	15.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	46	50	161

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who did not attend orientation nor were deferred within two months of registration. The combined sample of AFDC-FG and AFDC-U mandatory registrants is presented.

NOTES: The order in which the three counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Of the three counties, Ventura had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

"Contacts" includes sending notices of rescheduled orientations, the Problem Participation Notice (GAIN 22), standard county notices other than the GAIN 22 concerning missed orientations, or personal notes or letters; telephone conversations with the registrant; meetings with the registrant in the GAIN office or elsewhere; conversations with other household members, doctors, or other third parties; meetings between eligibility worker and registrant; and communications between GAIN case manager and eligibility worker. See Appendix Table F.3 for percentage distributions of each type of contact.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

C. The Efficacy of the Enforcement Procedures

The strategy of initiating enforcement proceedings by issuing a Problem Participation Notice appears to have had some effect on the extent to which counties were able to account for nonattenders by either getting them to attend orientation, determining that they had been or should have been deregistered from the program, or granting them a temporary deferral from participation. For example, Table 5.6 shows that the proportion of AFDC-FG nonattenders left uncovered by one of these three legitimate program statuses by the end of the six-month follow-up period was higher for those never sent a Problem Participation Notice (40 percent) than for those who were sent such a notice (20 percent). A similar pattern is evident for AFDC-U registrants. (The effect of placing nonattenders in money management is uncertain because this penalty was used for so few registrants in the study sample.) Issuing a Problem Participation Notice, which highlighted GAIN's penalties for noncompliance, could have encouraged some hesitant registrants to attend orientation (as appears to be the case among AFDC-FG mandatory registrants). Also, contacts between staff and registrants prompted by these notices could have led some registrants to be deferred or deregistered from GAIN.

The experience of Napa is a reminder, however, that high orientation attendance rates can be achieved with little reliance on enforcement proceedings or other penalties. This county devoted considerable staff time and resources to reaching registrants through phone calls and in-person contacts before their first scheduled orientation took place.

VI. Summary

Perhaps the primary lesson from this chapter is that, unless a county has severe problems keeping track of its caseload, as was the case in Santa Clara, most individuals who miss their first scheduled orientation either will attend a later session or will eventually become deregistered or deferred from GAIN. However, counties must choose how to invest staff and resources to respond to these individuals. If exposing the maximum number of registrants to GAIN's job search, education, and training services is desirable then counties would need to reach registrants quickly. This would require the implementation of procedures for scheduling orientations quickly, notifying registrants in a timely way (and perhaps promoting the program as well), monitoring attendance, and organizing quick and persistent responses to missed orientations. Not granting pre-orientation deferrals may also help, since deferrals prevent some individuals from even hearing about the program.

On the other hand, if administrators and staff find it acceptable to let deregistrations and deferrals -- which are often due to employment -- screen many prospective GAIN participants out of the program or its activities, then counties may choose to invest fewer resources in trying to reach those who do not immediately attend GAIN orientations and, instead, devote more resources to working first with registrants who initially attend, and at a later date deal with individuals who are still registered with GAIN but have not yet attended an orientation session.

In either case, the findings of the chapter indicate that staff and registrants would benefit

TABLE 5.6

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SUBSEQUENT GAIN STATUSES
FOR ORIENTATION NONATTENDERS, BY USE OF ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES
AND ASSISTANCE CATEGORY

Subsequent GAIN Status	Enforcement Strategies			
	Never Sent Problem Notice ^a	Sent Problem Notice ^a	Never Referred to Money ^b Management	Referred to Money ^b Management
<u>AFDC-FG Mandatory Registrants</u>				
Attended Orientation	32.2%	40.5%	36.0%	11.4%
Deferred	7.4	5.7	7.3	0.0
Deregistered	20.8	34.1	24.0	37.2
Did Not Attend Orientation, Was Not Deferred, or Deregistered	39.5	19.7	32.7	51.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<u>AFDC-U Mandatory Registrants</u>				
Attended Orientation	35.0	17.2	32.6	0.0
Deferred	4.4	7.8	5.3	3.5
Deregistered	23.0	68.7	30.9	79.1
Did Not Attend Orientation, Was Not Deferred, or Deregistered	37.6	6.3	31.2	17.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<u>Sample Size</u>				
AFDC-FG Mandatory Registrants	255	100	335	20
AFDC-U Mandatory Registrants	226	71	283	14

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who did not attend orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these calculations because of unavailable data.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

^a Only instances in which Problem Participation Notices were sent prior to orientation, deregistration, or deferral are included here.

^b Only instances of referral to money management which occurred prior to orientation, deregistration, or deferral are included here.

from a strengthening of communications between GAIN and income maintenance staff, for the purpose of better educating new registrants about the types of services that GAIN can provide.

CHAPTER 6

POST-ORIENTATION PARTICIPATION

The analysis in Chapter 4 summarized participation patterns among all individuals who had registered for GAIN during the sample enrollment periods, including those who never had any type of contact with GAIN program staff. This chapter examines participation patterns among registrants who attended a GAIN orientation -- the prerequisite for participation in job search, education, training, or work experience. More specifically, the chapter describes the extent of participation, the GAIN activities engaged in, and the continuity of participation by those registrants with whom program staff had an opportunity to work. Those registrants form the second box in the participation model presented in Chapter 4 (Figure 4.1).

This chapter addresses four main research questions. The first section of the chapter presents data on participation in the various GAIN program components and highlights differences in participation across counties, between AFDC-FG and AFDC-U registrants, and among other important subgroups, such as AFDC applicants and recipients. This section thus addresses the extent to which orientation attenders eventually participated in a GAIN component and the groups of registrants most likely to have participated in GAIN. The second section examines the extent to which orientation attenders eventually participated, were deregistered, or were deferred. This is referred to as the program's "coverage." The third section explores whether orientation attenders participated in the program on a continuous basis, that is, as long as they remained GAIN-registered. The fourth section explores the typical sequences in which individuals proceeded through the GAIN program model after their orientation. The final section summarizes the data on voluntary registrants' experiences vis-a-vis each of these issues.

The data on mandatory registrants used to address the above issues were collected from all the counties studied (described in Chapter 2), except for Fresno.¹ Data were collected for volunteers in four counties: Napa, San Mateo, Ventura, and Santa Clara.² The sample consists of the registrants in each county who had contact with GAIN within two months of their

¹The analyses in this chapter do not consider Fresno because data on orientation attendance in that county were unavailable for the data collection period examined. See Chapter 2 for a full discussion of the types of data collected in each county.

²For space considerations, the data on volunteers appear, as relevant, in the tables concerning mandatory registrants, although differences in the counties from which data were collected preclude easy comparisons between mandatory and voluntary registrants.

registration³ -- a time period within which most registrants should have had a chance to attend a program orientation.⁴ Unlike the measures presented in Chapter 4, which follow all registrants for six months following registration, the measures presented in this chapter trace the participation of registrants for four months after their attendance at a GAIN orientation (or any other first interaction with GAIN).⁵

I. Rates of Participation in Post-Orientation Activities

Table 6.1 shows the percentages of registrants who participated in the various GAIN activities within four months of their attendance at a GAIN orientation. The participation rates presented here are higher than the rates for all registrants, including those who did not attend an orientation (presented in Chapter 4), since registrants who did not attend an orientation did not have an opportunity to be assigned to a GAIN activity. As indicated in Table 6.1, about one-half of the mandatory registrants who did attend an orientation -- 47 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants and 50 percent of the AFDC-U registrants -- participated in a GAIN activity for at least one day within four months of their orientation.⁶ These participation rates did not increase dramatically over a longer follow-up period; a separate analysis (not shown here) indicates that most registrants who eventually participated in GAIN generally did so within four months of their orientation.⁷

³Registrants were required to attend a GAIN orientation before appraisal or participation in a GAIN component. However, evidence that an individual attended orientation or the exact date of orientation were occasionally missing from registrants' casefiles. In these instances, appraisal dates or component participation dates were used as evidence of contact with GAIN. In addition, attendance at a pre-orientation interview in Kern was considered to constitute orientation attendance.

⁴For example, approximately 98 percent of the mandatory registrants sampled in Napa attended a GAIN orientation within two months of their registration. The percentages for the other six counties were 37 percent in San Mateo, 58 percent in Butte, 83 percent in Ventura; 78 percent in Kern, 78 percent in Stanislaus, and 32 percent in Santa Clara. As discussed in Chapter 5, some individuals attended orientations later than two months after their registration. Nonetheless, the counties fell into almost the same ranking whether the orientation attendance rate was calculated at two months after registration or at six months after registration.

⁵MDRC staff allowed a two-month period for the orientation component to have taken place because of the long lags apparent between registrants' registration and attendance at an orientation. Allowing two months for the registrants to attend orientation left four months of post-orientation follow-up data, given the overall follow-up period of six months.

⁶All statistics presented in this chapter are weighted to reflect counties' GAIN caseload sizes, according to the procedure described in Chapter 2. This procedure, for example, gives the most weight to the number of registrants in Santa Clara and the least weight to the number of registrants in Napa.

⁷This analysis examined the sample of early registrants described in note 8 of Chapter 4. Among AFDC-FG mandatory registrants the rate of participation in a GAIN activity at four months
(continued...)

TABLE 6.1

PERCENT OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION,
BY GAIN STATUS AND ASSISTANCE CATEGORY

Activity	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Participated, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training ^a	47.3%	49.5%	71.2%
Participated, Excluding Self-Initiated Education or Training ^a	33.4	43.4	34.2
Participated in Any Job Search	13.7	25.0	16.7
Job Club	8.9	13.1	14.7
Supervised Job Search	4.8	11.2	2.9
90-Day Job Search	0.7	1.6	0.0
Participated in Any Education or Training	34.4	28.1	61.7
Self-Initiated Education or Training	14.1	6.5	39.1
Program-Referred Education or Training	20.3	21.6	24.6
Basic Education ^c	19.9	21.1	23.1
English as a Second Language	4.7	8.6	0.5
Adult Basic Education	8.5	8.3	10.1
GED Preparation	6.8	4.2	12.7
Post-Assessment Education or Training	0.5	0.6	2.5
Assessed	4.3	5.7	7.6
Participated in Work Experience	1.2	0.7	0.2
Deferred	41.6	33.3	4.7
Referred for Money Management	2.6	1.4	0.0
Deregistered	18.7	28.0	36.5
Due to Sanctioning	0.7	0.2	4.2
Due to Other Reasons	18.0	27.8	32.3
Received GED, Post-Appraisal	1.0	1.8	7.7
Employed ^d	21.3	29.3	12.0
Sample Size	611	541	276

(continued)

TABLE 6.1 (continued)

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these activity measures because of unavailable data.

Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

Subcategory percentages may not add to category percentages because sample members can be included in more than one activity.

^a This includes participation in job search, education, training and work experience activities. It does not include attendance at orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

^b Data are available only for the first occurrence of self-initiated education or training.

^c Included here is program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

^d "Employed" includes any indication of employment found in individuals' casefiles, including employment that resulted in deferral or deregistration or that occurred after an individual left welfare.

A. Participation Rates Across Counties

Earlier chapters have shown that GAIN staff in the different counties faced very different challenges in implementing GAIN, depending on the local populations and local conditions. As a result, the counties created various kinds of service delivery networks and case management systems, which also reflected a variety of program philosophies and staff priorities. As will be discussed in the remaining chapters of this report, these kinds of differences resulted in considerable variation in GAIN operations across counties.

As shown in Table 6.2, cross-county differences are also evident in the participation rates for all AFDC-FG mandatory registrants who had attended an orientation. (County-specific participation rates for AFDC-U registrants appear in Appendix Table G.1; these rates also varied significantly by county.) Among the AFDC-FG registrants, overall participation rates at four months post-orientation ranged from 30 percent in Stanislaus to 56 percent in Kern.

Participation in specific GAIN activities also varied by county. In part, this reflected the percentage of orientation attenders in each county who were determined to be in need of basic education. For example, registrants in Ventura and Santa Clara participated more in basic education than in the other GAIN activities; Napa registrants were most concentrated in job search activities; and Butte registrants were most concentrated in self-initiated education or training activities.

Counties also differed in the percentage of deferrals granted by program staff and in the percentage of deregistrations, that is, registrants who left the program because they moved or stopped receiving welfare, among other reasons. In general, the counties with the highest rates of participation in post-orientation activities had the lowest deferral rates; those with the lowest participation rates had the highest deferral rates. Chapter 7 discusses in more detail these county variations in deferral practices.

B. Participation Rates Among AFDC-FG and AFDC-U Registrants

As described in Chapter 1, GAIN staff make assignments to post-orientation activities based on registrants' welfare and employment history, current vocational and educational activities, need for basic education, and personal preferences. It is therefore important to explore differences in participation between AFDC-FG mandatory registrants (most of whom are single

⁷(...continued)

post-orientation was 43 percent, whereas the rate at eight months post-orientation was 49 percent -- for a difference of only 6 points. Among AFDC-U mandatory registrants the rates were 38 percent at four months and 43 percent at eight months -- a 5-point difference. The largest increase in participation rates seems to occur when the follow-up period is increased from four months to six months; very little change in the rates is apparent when the follow-up period is extended from six months to eight months.

TABLE 6.2

PERCENT OF ALL AFDC-FG MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS
INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Participated, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training ^a	53.7%	55.2%	47.6%	42.7%	56.2%	29.5%	53.5%	47.3%
Participated, Excluding Self-Initiated Education or Training ^a	38.7	36.2	23.2	31.5	45.5	21.4	37.2	33.3
Participated in Any Job Search	26.3	12.1	15.9	11.3	22.3	8.9	9.3	16.3
Job Club	25.0	6.9	15.9	5.6	6.3	8.9	9.3	11.9
Supervised Job Search	8.8	5.2	1.2	4.0	16.1	0.0	0.0	5.8
90-Day Job Search	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.6
Participated in Any Education or Training	38.7	46.6	32.9	32.3	33.9	21.4	44.2	34.0
Self-Initiated Education or Training ^b	16.3	19.0	24.4	11.3	11.6	8.0	16.3	14.4
Program-Referred Education or Training	22.5	27.6	8.5	21.0	22.3	13.4	27.9	19.6
Basic Education ^c	17.5	25.9	6.1	21.0	22.3	13.4	27.9	18.2
English as a Second Language	1.3	0.0	2.4	6.5	0.9	0.9	11.6	2.8
Adult Basic Education	6.3	19.0	0.0	10.5	6.3	5.4	14.0	7.6
GED Preparation	10.0	6.9	3.7	4.8	15.2	7.1	2.3	7.9
Post-Assessment Education or Training	7.5	1.7	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Assessed	11.3	5.2	9.8	2.4	8.0	2.7	0.0	6.2
Participated in Work Experience	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4	0.0	0.0	1.4
Deferred	40.0	39.7	24.4	53.2	35.7	62.5	32.6	43.1
Referred for Money Management	5.0	3.4	1.2	0.8	1.8	3.6	4.7	2.8

(continued)

TABLE 6.2 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Deregistered	27.5%	24.1%	17.1%	16.9%	29.5%	19.5%	9.3%	21.7%
Due to Sanctioning	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	2.3	0.3
Due to Other Reasons	27.5	24.1	17.1	16.9	28.6	19.5	7.0	21.4
Received GED, Post-Appraisal	2.5	3.4	1.2	0.0	2.7	0.9	0.0	1.5
Employed ^d	27.5	17.2	13.4	26.6	25.0	26.8	14.0	23.3
Sample Size	80	58	82	124	112	112	43	611

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

Subcategory percentages may not add to category percentages because sample members can be included in more than one activity.

^aThis includes participation in job search, education, training and work experience activities. It does not include attendance at orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

^bData are available only for the first occurrence of self-initiated education or training.

^cIncluded here is program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

^d"Employed" includes any indication of employment found in individuals' casefiles, including employment that resulted in deferral or deregistration or that occurred after an individual left welfare.

female heads of households with children age 6 or older) and AFDC-U registrants (most of whom are men in two-parent households) because, as shown in Chapter 2, the two groups are subject to different welfare regulations and exhibit different demographic characteristics. Moreover, the GAIN legislation mandates that if a county should experience a shortage of GAIN resources in the future, AFDC-U applicants and short-term recipients must be among the first groups temporarily excluded from program services.

Table 6.1 compares the participation of AFDC-FG and AFDC-U mandatory registrants in the various post-orientation activities. About one-fifth of both groups participated in basic education within four months of their orientation. The AFDC-U registrants, however, participated in job search activities at a higher rate than did the AFDC-FG registrants: 25 percent of the AFDC-U registrants engaged in job search activity, whereas only 14 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants did. On the other hand, AFDC-FG registrants were more likely to be involved in self-initiated education or training activities than the AFDC-U registrants: 14 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants found programs on their own initiative, whereas only 7 percent of the AFDC-U registrants did so.

There are several possible explanations for these differences. As will be discussed in Chapter 9, program staff suggested in interviews that the AFDC-U registrants were more resistant to undertaking basic education than the AFDC-FG registrants, and as a result they may have chosen to participate in job search activities instead. Further, a lower percentage of AFDC-U than AFDC-FG registrants were already involved in self-initiated education or training at the time of their orientation;⁸ and thus, a higher percentage of AFDC-U registrants may have been available for job search assignment after their orientation. As a final point of comparison, AFDC-FG registrants were more likely to be deferred, and less likely to be deregistered, than AFDC-U registrants.

C. Participation Rates Among Other Selected Subgroups

This section explores the extent of GAIN participation among two other types of subgroups: AFDC applicants and recipients, and registrants determined to be in need of basic education.⁹

1. AFDC Applicants and Recipients. Data presented in Chapter 2 indicated that approximately one-third of the AFDC-FG mandatory orientation attenders and one-half of the

⁸Previous evaluations of welfare employment programs have indicated a similar tendency for AFDC-U registrants to be less active in self-initiated educational or training activities than mandatory AFDC-FG registrants. In San Diego's Saturation Work Initiative Model (SWIM) program, for example, 13 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants participated in self-initiated education or training within a twelve-month follow-up period, whereas only 8 percent of AFDC-U registrants did so. (See Hamilton, 1988, p. 106.)

⁹Other preliminary comparisons of selected subgroups of orientation attenders having different known background characteristics, such as English-speaking ability, did not reveal major differences in participation patterns.

AFDC-U orientation attenders were applicants for AFDC when they registered for GAIN. Because applicants and recipients have different welfare employment, and other background characteristics that might affect their involvement in GAIN, the analysis compared their participation patterns. The data indicate that applicants were somewhat less likely to participate in a GAIN activity than recipients. Among AFDC-FG mandatory registrants, 42 percent of the applicants and 51 percent of the recipients participated in some type of GAIN component within the four-month post-orientation period. The participation rate difference between the two subgroups was similar among the AFDC-U registrants: almost 45 percent of the applicants were active within the follow-up period compared with 54 percent of the recipients.

2. Registrants Determined to Be in Need of Basic Education. As discussed in Chapter 2, approximately 60 percent of all mandatory orientation attenders were determined to be in need of basic education on the basis of their educational background, scores on the basic skills test administered at orientation, or limited English-speaking ability. Because GAIN mandates different service sequences based on a person's educational background and basic skills, and because of other possible differences between individuals considered to need basic education and those not considered to need it, the participation rates for these two groups were compared.

The data indicate that registrants determined to be in need of basic education were somewhat less likely to participate in some type of GAIN component than those registrants who were not found to need of such services. Among AFDC-FG mandatory registrants, 41 percent of those judged to be in need of basic education participated in some type of GAIN activity (usually basic education) within four months of orientation while the participation rate was 48 percent for those not requiring these services. This differential was similar among the AFDC-U registrants.¹⁰

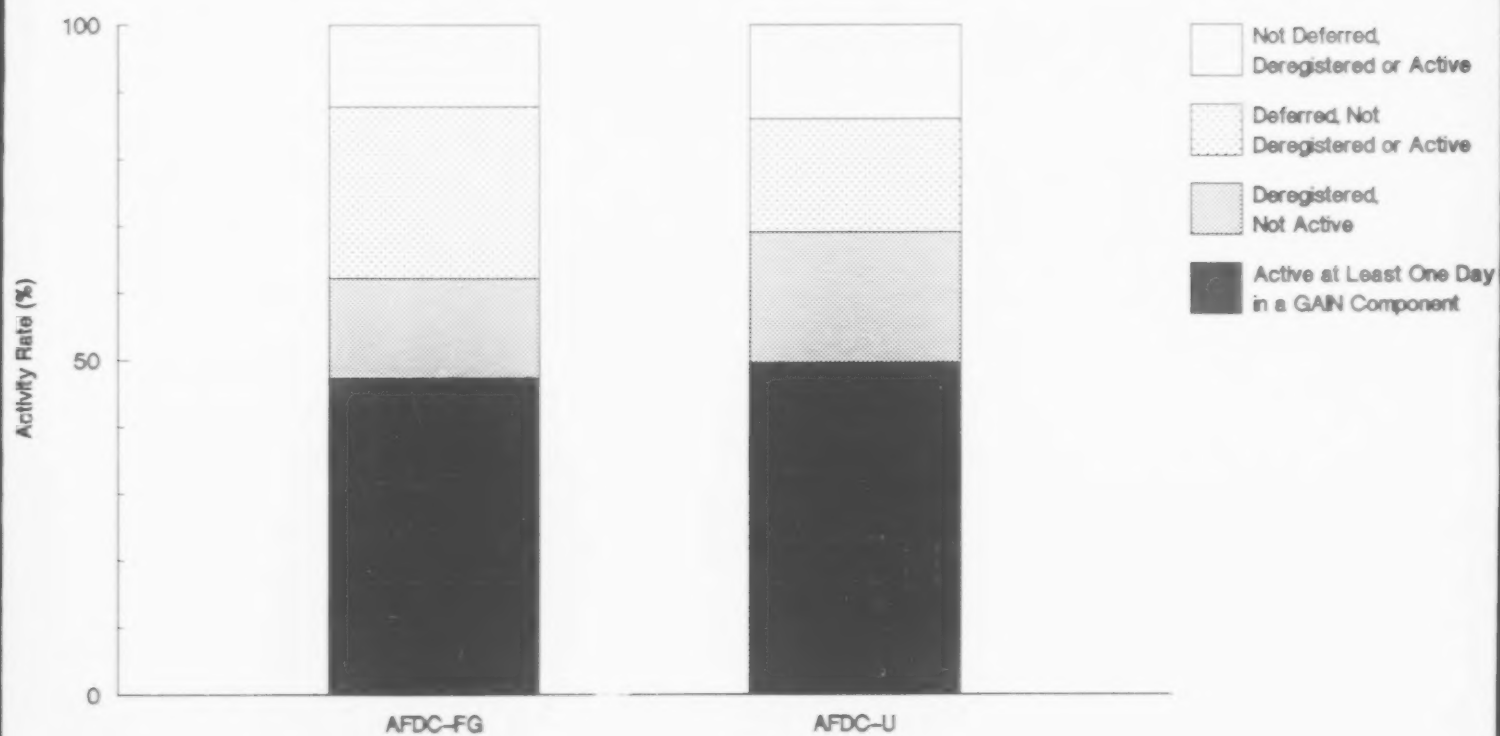
II. Coverage Among Orientation Attenders

The previous section indicated that approximately half of all mandatory orientation attenders participated in a GAIN activity for at least one day within four months of their orientation. However, the data also indicate that large proportions of registrants were deregistered or deferred within this same follow-up period. This section examines the proportion of orientation attenders who either participated, were deregistered, or were deferred within the four-month post-orientation period. This proportion represents those "covered" by the program in some way.

Figure 6.1 suggests that over 85 percent of all orientation attenders were either active (that is, participated for at least one day) in a GAIN activity, deregistered, or deferred by the end of the four-month follow-up period. As noted earlier, approximately half of the orientation

¹⁰Among AFDC-U orientation attenders, 43 percent of those determined to be in need of basic education were active in some type of GAIN component during the four-month post-orientation period while this same rate was 53 percent among AFDC-U registrants judged not to be in need of such services.

FIGURE 6.1
PROGRAM STATUS OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION



attenders participated at some point within this period. An additional 17 percent were not active, but were deregistered at some point within the four months following orientation.¹¹ An additional 22 percent were neither active nor deregistered, but were deferred within the follow-up period.¹² As chapter 7 will show, the most common reason for deferral was part-time employment.

The proportion of orientation attenders who were either active, deregistered, or deferred was fairly similar across the study counties. (See Appendix Tables G.2 and G.3.) Among AFDC-FG mandatory registrants, this proportion ranged from 79 percent in Butte to 99 percent in Napa.

As will be discussed in a later section, many of the individuals not "covered" by either participation, deregistration, or deferral probably reflect case management oversights on the part of program staff.

III. Continuity of Participation in Post-Orientation Activities

As explained in Chapter 1, one of the key features of GAIN is its requirement that registrants remain active in the program as long as they remain mandatory registrants. In contrast, most other welfare initiatives either have required participation for only a limited time or, if the program model specified ongoing participation, were *de facto* short-term. This section assesses the extent to which GAIN registrants in the seven counties remained active in the program throughout the four-month post-orientation period.

The data used in this analysis were collected from GAIN casefiles. Individuals were counted as active (enrolled) during all days between the first day of their participation in an activity and the day they interrupted or ended the activity. Registrants were considered subject to the continuous participation requirement throughout the 120-day (or four-month) post-orientation period or until their deregistration, if it occurred before the end of the four-month period. Appendix Table G.4 shows how long individuals remained registered with the program, and thus subject to that requirement. The results indicate that approximately four-fifths of all oriented registrants remained registered for GAIN throughout most of the follow-up period, that is, for at least 106 days of the 120-day follow-up period.

Table 6.3 shows the extent to which individuals remained enrolled in a GAIN activity each day they were mandatory GAIN registrants. Several findings are salient. First, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, approximately one-half of all mandatory orientation attenders never participated in a GAIN component. Obviously, these registrants did not fulfill the continuous

¹¹The data available for this study did not permit an accurate estimation of the various reasons for deregistration other than sanctioning.

¹²An additional 2 percent had been sent a Problem Participation Notice within the four-month follow-up period.

TABLE 6.3

PERCENT OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY PERCENT OF DAYS ACTIVE OUT OF DAYS REGISTERED
DURING THE FOUR MONTHS FOLLOWING ORIENTATION,
BY GAIN STATUS AND ASSISTANCE CATEGORY

Percent of Days Active Out of Days Registered	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Never Active	55.0%	50.8%	27.8%
Ever Active	45.0	49.2	72.3
At Least 1 Percent	45.0	49.2	72.3
At Least 10 Percent	40.6	40.5	67.4
At Least 20 Percent	31.3	31.7	60.6
At Least 30 Percent	27.5	26.3	56.2
At Least 40 Percent	23.7	22.7	52.0
At Least 50 Percent	21.6	19.4	45.8
At Least 60 Percent	18.1	16.5	42.5
At Least 70 Percent	15.0	14.3	40.7
At Least 80 Percent	13.0	12.1	30.9
At Least 90 Percent	9.2	7.6	23.9
100 Percent	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sample Size	587	520	267

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these calculations because of unavailable data.

"Days Active" represents all days in which the individual was active in job search, education, training, work experience, or assessment, starting with the first day of participation and ending with the activity interruption or end date (including weekends). It does not include orientation, appraisal, GED receipt or employment. Note that assessment is included in the "Active" measures only on Tables 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and Appendix Table G.5.

"Days Active" was calculated by summing all days enrolled in an activity. Sample members with missing status start dates or with missing activity start or end dates are not included in this table. Therefore, sample sizes are smaller than on other tables which present results for orientation attenders.

(continued)

TABLE 6.3 (continued)

"Registered" represents all days during the follow-up period in which the individual was available to be assigned to a program activity, was deferred, or was pending.

All percentage calculations are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row.

participation requirement. (Some of these individuals, however, may have been deferred throughout the follow-up period.) Second, only a small proportion of all orientation attenders -- around 8 percent -- remained enrolled in a GAIN activity during at least 90 percent of the days in which they were eligible for program services.

A standard of 90 percent may be too strict, however, because of inevitable periods of inactivity, such as extended periods of appraisal, lags between the end of appraisal and the start of a first activity, temporary deferrals, or lags between subsequent activities. If the continuous participation standard is defined instead at 70 percent, roughly 15 percent of all mandatory orientation attenders met the standard, according to Table 6.3. (Note that the GAIN legislation does not specify a particular standard for continuous participation.)

The counties varied widely on this measure, as shown in Table 6.4, although in no county did more than one-quarter of the registrants remain enrolled in a GAIN activity for at least 70 percent of the days in which they were eligible for the program. Among AFDC-FG mandatory registrants, those who participated on an almost continuous basis (that is, for at least 70 percent of the days they were registered) ranged from 5 percent in Stanislaus to 23 percent in Napa. (County-specific statistics for AFDC-U registrants appear in Appendix Table G.5.)

Several reasons may explain why so few mandatory registrants participated on a continuous basis during the four-month period after their orientation. One is that, as indicated earlier in this chapter, over one-third of all orientation attenders were deferred at some point during the follow-up period because GAIN staff deemed them to be temporarily unable to participate. Table 6.5 attempts to control for the large number of deferrals in GAIN by calculating the percentages based on the total number of days the individuals were recorded as being in an "active" or available status, instead of on the total number of days they were registered, as in the previous two tables.

The results of Table 6.5 indicate that even when registrants were judged by program staff as having no barriers to participation, that is, when they were not in a deferral status, few registrants participated on a continuous basis. In fact, almost half of the mandatory orientation attenders never participated in a GAIN activity during any of the days in which staff judged them to be available for GAIN services. In addition, only about 19 percent of all mandatory orientation attenders were enrolled in an activity during at least 70 percent of their "available" days. Even among those who participated for at least one day, only approximately 29 percent were enrolled during most of their available days.

Thus, the large number of deferrals is not the only possible explanation for the low rates of continuous participation in GAIN. Three other explanations may help account for the low rates. First, some individuals may have been inactive for some time while waiting for an assigned activity to begin but then left the program, that is, deregistered, before they participated. Second, as will be discussed in the next section, some individuals were "lost" in the program, that is, no case manager appeared to be working with them. A few others were involved in GAIN's enforcement process for most of the four-month follow-up period. Finally, some registrants may have participated in an activity for at least one day but then dropped out of the activity, failed

TABLE 6.4

PERCENT OF AFDC-FG MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY PERCENT OF DAYS ACTIVE OUT OF DAYS REGISTERED
DURING THE FOUR MONTHS FOLLOWING ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Percent of Days Active Out of Days Registered	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Un- weighted Total
Never Active	46.8%	43.9%	53.1%	56.9%	42.7%	70.3%	57.6%	53.4%
Ever Active	53.2	56.3	46.9	43.3	57.3	29.7	42.3	46.7
At Least 1 Percent	53.2	56.3	46.9	43.3	57.3	29.7	42.3	46.7
At Least 10 Percent	45.6	51.0	43.2	36.8	53.4	26.1	39.3	41.5
At Least 20 Percent	41.8	38.7	33.3	31.9	39.8	19.8	27.2	33.6
At Least 30 Percent	32.9	33.4	32.1	26.2	34.0	15.3	27.2	28.3
At Least 40 Percent	30.4	26.4	27.2	22.9	30.1	11.7	24.2	24.5
At Least 50 Percent	29.1	24.6	24.7	19.6	27.2	9.9	24.2	22.4
At Least 60 Percent	25.3	17.6	18.5	18.0	20.4	7.2	24.2	18.4
At Least 70 Percent	22.8	15.8	13.6	14.7	17.5	5.4	21.2	15.5
At Least 80 Percent	17.7	12.3	9.9	10.6	16.5	4.5	21.2	12.6
At Least 90 Percent	13.9	5.3	9.9	7.3	13.6	2.7	12.1	9.3
100 Percent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sample Size	79	57	81	123	103	111	33	587

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The counties are arranged on the table according to the number of registrants in their GAIN programs as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

"Days Active" represents all days in which the individual was enrolled in job search, education, work experience, or assessment, starting with the first day of participation and ending with the activity interruption or end date (including weekends). It does not include orientation, appraisal, GED receipt or employment. Note that assessment is included in the "Active" measures only on Tables 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and Appendix Table G.5.

"Days Active" was calculated by summing all days enrolled in an activity. Sample members with missing status start dates or with missing activity start or end dates are not included in this table. Therefore, sample sizes are smaller than on other tables which present results for orientation attenders.

"Registered" represents all days during the follow-up period in which the individual was available to be assigned to a program activity, was deferred, or was pending.

All percentage calculations are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row. Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

TABLE 6.5

PERCENT OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY PERCENT OF DAYS ACTIVE OUT OF DAYS IN ACTIVE/AVAILABLE STATUS
DURING THE FOUR MONTHS FOLLOWING ORIENTATION,
BY GAIN STATUS AND ASSISTANCE CATEGORY

Percent of Days Active Out of Days in Active/Available Status	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Never Active	46.2%	43.8%	27.4%
Ever Active	53.8	56.3	72.7
At Least 1 Percent	53.8	56.3	72.7
At Least 10 Percent	50.5	49.4	68.3
At Least 20 Percent	42.4	41.7	61.7
At Least 30 Percent	36.1	34.6	57.4
At Least 40 Percent	31.3	28.8	53.7
At Least 50 Percent	27.8	25.2	47.1
At Least 60 Percent	22.6	21.3	42.9
At Least 70 Percent	19.5	17.7	41.1
At Least 80 Percent	17.0	14.7	31.0
At Least 90 Percent	11.5	10.1	24.0
100 Percent	0.1	0.3	0.0
Sample Size	507	463	264

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these calculations because of unavailable data.

"Days Active" represents all days in which the individual was enrolled in job search, education, training, work experience, or assessment, starting with the first day of participation, and ending with the activity interruption or end date (including weekends). It does not include orientation, appraisal, GED receipt or employment. Note that assessment is included in the "Active" measures only on Tables 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and Appendix Table G.5.

"Days Active" was calculated by summing all days enrolled in an activity. Sample members with missing status start dates, or with missing activity start or end dates, are not included in this table. Therefore, sample sizes are smaller than on other tables which present results for orientation attenders.

TABLE 6.5 (continued)

"Active/Available Status" represents all days during the follow-up period in which the individual was judged by program staff to be available to be assigned to a program activity.

All percentage calculations are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row.

to participate in their next-assigned activity, or may never have been assigned to a subsequent activity. How the GAIN staff reacted to registrants who failed to attend or dropped out of assigned activities is discussed in Chapter 8.

IV. Sequences of Participation in Post-Orientation Activities

The GAIN legislation and regulations stipulate that individuals with certain characteristics should follow a specific sequence through the GAIN program model, although the rules allow some flexibility. For example, program planners originally expected that job search or basic education would be the first post-orientation activity for most registrants, the exceptions primarily being those already in self-initiated activities.

This section presents information on the typical paths that registrants followed through GAIN in the four months following their orientation. Of particular interest are the effects that deferrals, the length of basic education programs, and the nature of the populations served in each county had on registrants' experiences in the program.

Table 6.6 shows the percentages of registrants following a variety of possible sequences for their first and second activities, while Figure 6.2 illustrates, based on the data in Table 6.6, the distribution of registrants according to their seven initial statuses.

Most striking in Figure 6.2 is the size of the deferral slice: the most common first step for mandatory registrants following orientation was assignment to a deferral status. Over one-third of the AFDC-FG registrants were initially deferred while over one-quarter of the AFDC-U registrants fit this pattern. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the most frequent reasons GAIN staff recorded for deferring registrants were for part-time employment, illness, or family crisis. Broadly speaking, this finding suggests that using GAIN guidelines, program staff judged a large proportion of the registrants required to participate as being in inappropriate circumstances for immediate participation in GAIN.

Furthermore, Table 6.6 indicates that few registrants who were initially deferred (following orientation) later participated in a GAIN activity. Only 8 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants and 11 percent of the AFDC-U registrants who were initially deferred went on to participate in a GAIN component in the following four months, and only a somewhat larger proportion of these initially deferred registrants deregistered during that period.

For those not deferred following program orientation, basic education was the most common first activity for AFDC-FG registrants, while job search was the most common one for AFDC-U registrants. The majority of the remaining registrants were in self-initiated programs, deregistered, or never enrolled in any activity or official program status. Regarding this last group, 13 percent to 14 percent of both mandatory registrant groups were never deregistered, deferred, or enrolled in a program activity over the four-month post-orientation period. As described in Chapter 4, most of these individuals were probably "lost" in the program, that is, their casefiles indicated they had not been deferred or deregistered, yet no case manager

TABLE 6.6

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS, BY GAIN STATUS, ASSISTANCE CATEGORY,
AND PARTICIPATION IN A FIRST OR SECOND ACTIVITY
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION

First Activity	Second Activity	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
		AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
Job Search	Program-Referred Basic Education	12.7%	22.6%	13.4%
	Self-Initiated Education or Training	0.3	2.6	3.0
	Program-Referred Post-Assessment Education or Training	0.0	0.2	0.0
	Work Experience	0.3	0.4	0.8
	Deferral	0.6	0.2	0.1
	Deregistration	4.1	4.9	1.4
	Still Active in Job Search ^a	1.3	4.5	5.0
	No Other Activity	0.3	0.4	0.0
		5.8	9.4	3.0
Program-Referred Basic Education	Job Search	18.0	17.2	19.9
	Self-Initiated Education or Training	0.4	0.5	3.0
	Program-Referred Post-Assessment Education or Training	0.0	0.0	1.6
	Work Experience	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Deferral	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Deregistration	2.3	1.6	0.8
	Still Active in Program-Referred Basic Education ^a	0.5	1.0	3.3
	No Other Activity	7.9	7.3	4.3
		6.9	7.0	6.7
Self-Initiated Education or Training	Job Search	12.4	6.0	37.5
	Program-Referred Basic Education	0.2	0.2	0.2
	Program-Referred Post-Assessment Education or Training	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Work Experience	0.0	0.0	0.3
	Deferral	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Deregistration	0.5	0.4	0.2
	Still Active in Self-Initiated Education or Training ^a	1.1	0.3	7.4
	No Other Activity	8.1	4.6	23.8
		2.6	0.6	5.6
Program-Referred Post-Assessment or Training	Any Other Activity	0.2	0.2	0.4

(continued)

TABLE 6.6 (continued)

First Activity	Second Activity	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary
		AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	Registrants AFDC-FG
Work Experience	Any Other Activity	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%
Deferral		34.7	25.9	2.2
	Job Search	0.4	1.7	0.0
	Program-Referred Basic Education	1.6	1.1	0.0
	Self-Initiated Education or Training	0.9	0.1	0.0
	Program-Referred Post-Assessment Education or Training	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Work Experience	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Deregistration	6.3	6.2	0.2
	No Other Activity	25.6	16.9	1.9
Deregistration		8.6	13.4	19.3
Never in Any of the Above Activities or Statuses		13.0	14.2	7.4
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size		611	541	276

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these activity measures because of unavailable data.

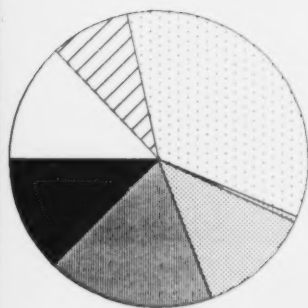
Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent and "Second Activity" percentages may not add to "First Activity" percentages because of rounding.

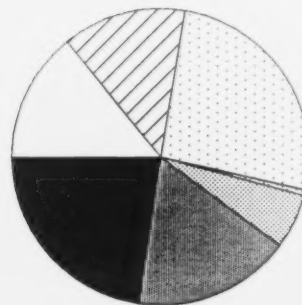
^a "Still Active" means that the individual participated at least one day and did not have an interruption or end date for that activity within the follow-up period.

FIGURE 6.2

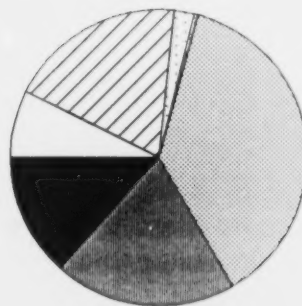
PROPORTION OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY FIRST ACTIVITY WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION



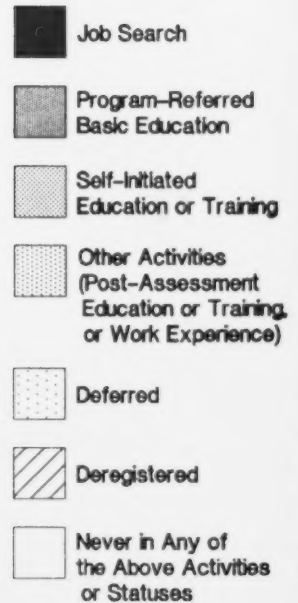
AFDC-FG
Mandatory Registrants



AFDC-U
Mandatory Registrants



AFDC-FG
Voluntary Registrants



appeared to be actively working with them. A few of these individuals were placed in conciliation during the follow-up period. In addition, some of these individuals may have been deliberately placed in a hold status.¹³

Table 6.6 indicates that for the most part registrants participated in only one activity during the four-month follow-up period. Fewer than one out of seven individuals who participated in job search activities were later involved in another GAIN component. Among those who initially pursued basic education, less than 3 percent later participated in another GAIN component. As shown in the table, many individuals enrolled in basic education programs were still in their programs as of the end of the four-month follow-up period.

A separate analysis of data using a longer follow-up period yielded much the same results (not shown here). Among early registrants in a sample tracked for eight months after their orientation, about 9 percent participated in more than one activity over that period.¹⁴ In addition, roughly 10 percent of those who were initially deferred participated later in a GAIN activity. This analysis indicated that it may take registrants a long time to reach the assessment stage of the model and be assigned to the later components (PREP, on-the-job training, or vocational training) or that few registrants may reach this stage, or both.

The above results generally held true in all of the seven study counties. In all counties except Butte, the most common first step for AFDC-FG mandatory registrants after their orientation was to be placed in a deferral status. In Butte the registrants were most commonly involved in self-initiated activities as a first step, reflecting the fact that Butte staff put a priority on registering self-initiated individuals during the period studied in this report. In addition, with the exception of Napa registrants, fewer than one-fifth of the AFDC-FG mandatory registrants who initially engaged in job search in any county went on to another program component within the four-month follow-up period.

V. Post-Orientation Participation Patterns Among Voluntary Registrants

MDRC collected data on voluntary registrants in four of the counties studied: Napa, San Mateo, Ventura, and Santa Clara. As indicated earlier in Table 6.1, participation rates among volunteers who attended a GAIN orientation were higher than the rates for all volunteers (summarized in Table 4.3 in Chapter 4), as was true among mandatory registrants as well. Again, this finding was to be expected since those who did not attend an orientation did not have an opportunity to be assigned to GAIN activities. Among those volunteers who did go to an orientation, over 71 percent participated in some type of GAIN component over the following four months. Almost half of the volunteer participants engaged in program-arranged

¹³For example, some registrants in Butte remained in an appraisal status for the entire follow-up period, in an effort by GAIN staff to keep caseload sizes manageable.

¹⁴Eight months of post-orientation follow-up data are available for approximately 39 percent of all sampled registrants who attended a GAIN orientation. See note 8 in Chapter 4 for a complete description of this sample.

activities; the remainder participated in self-initiated activities.

Cross-county differences in rates of participation by AFDC-FG volunteer registrants appear in Table 6.7. Participation rates over the four-month post-orientation period ranged from 47 percent in Napa to 80 percent in Santa Clara. The types of activities in which volunteers participated also varied by county. Volunteers in Napa could most commonly be found in job search activities; those in San Mateo, in basic education programs; and those in Santa Clara, in self-initiated education or training. No particular activity was clearly predominant among volunteers in Ventura.

The four counties exhibited further variation in the frequency with which program staff granted deferrals to volunteers and the proportion of volunteers who left the program, that is, who deregistered. Although only 10 percent of all volunteers sampled were deferred at some point during the four-month follow-up period, deferral rates ranged from zero in Santa Clara to 23 percent in Ventura. Deregistration rates ranged from 28 percent in Santa Clara to 63 percent in Napa.

In the analyses of continuous participation, the proportion of voluntary registrants who participated as long as they remained registered with the program was higher than the proportion of mandatory registrants. Volunteers were registered for GAIN for a shorter span of time than mandatory registrants during the four-month follow-up period (not shown here). But as Table 6.3 indicated, 41 percent of all volunteers participated for at least 70 percent of the days in which they were registered with GAIN; the comparable figure for the mandatory registrants in Napa, San Mateo, Ventura, and Santa Clara was approximately 20 percent (not shown here).

The voluntary registrants also did not necessarily follow the typical paths of the mandatory registrants. The volunteers were more likely to participate initially in self-initiated activities, and much less likely to be initially deferred, than the mandatory registrants. As shown earlier in Table 6.6 and Figure 6.2, 38 percent of the volunteers engaged in self-initiated activities after (or as of) their GAIN orientation; only 2 percent were deferred after orientation. In contrast, 13 percent of the mandatory AFDC-FG registrants in Napa, San Mateo, Ventura, and Santa Clara participated in self-initiated activities as a first activity; and 35 percent of these registrants were initially deferred (results not shown here).

VI. Summary

Two main points have emerged from the information presented in this chapter. First, few mandatory registrants were active in GAIN on a continuous basis. Several explanations may account for this result: a large proportion of those who attended an orientation were deferred immediately after their orientation, most commonly because they were employed part time; deferrals for other reasons such as illness and family crises were also made frequently and, as Chapter 7 will describe, for long periods of time; and one in seven mandatory registrants appeared to have been "lost" in the program because of case management oversights on the part of program staff.

TABLE 6.7

PERCENT OF ALL AFDC-FG VOLUNTARY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS
INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Ventura	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Participated, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training	46.6%	61.4%	66.7%	79.5%	60.3%
Participated, Excluding Self-Initiated Education or Training	38.3	43.2	40.0	30.8	38.3
Participated in Any Job Search	27.8	13.6	23.3	12.8	21.6
Job Club	27.1	4.5	15.0	12.8	17.5
Supervised Job Search	6.8	9.1	8.3	0.0	6.4
90-Day Job Search	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Participated in Any Education or Training	36.1	54.5	48.3	71.8	48.8
Self-Initiated Education or Training	9.0	22.7	26.7	51.3	23.5
Program-Referred Education or Training	27.8	36.4	21.7	23.1	26.7
Basic Education ^c	21.8	31.8	20.0	23.1	23.2
English as a Second Language	0.8	2.3	1.7	0.0	1.1
Adult Basic Education	9.0	11.4	10.0	10.3	9.9
GED Preparation	12.0	20.5	8.3	12.8	12.6
Post-Assessment Education or Training	12.0	4.5	1.7	0.0	5.8
Assessed	15.0	11.4	8.3	5.1	10.9
Participated in Work Experience	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Deferred	5.3	9.1	23.3	0.0	9.9
Referred for Money Management	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Deregistered	63.2	40.9	41.7	28.2	47.5
Due to Sanctioning	1.5	6.8	13.3	2.6	5.8
Due to Other Reasons	61.7	34.1	28.4	25.6	31.7
Received GED, Post-Appraisal	3.8	2.3	3.3	10.3	4.5
Employed ^d	18.0	18.2	21.7	7.7	17.3
Sample Size	133	44	60	39	276

SOURCE and NOTES: See Table 6.2.

Second, the participation rates calculated varied substantially across counties, as did the extent to which the counties succeeded in implementing the continuous participation requirement.

Chapter 7 describes how assignment and deferral decisions were made at orientation and appraisal sessions, both in general and in different counties. Chapter 8 discusses the case management practices found in the different counties. Together these two chapters provide greater insight into the challenges the counties have faced in implementing the continuous participation requirement for their mandatory GAIN registrants.

CHAPTER 7

ORIENTATION AND APPRAISAL

This chapter explores the operation of GAIN orientation and appraisal meetings in the eight counties during the study period. At orientation, GAIN staff explain the program's services and registrants' rights and responsibilities and collect information on registrants not already obtained by the eligibility workers. At appraisal the staff discuss this and other information with the registrant and select an initial GAIN activity or decide that the registrant should be temporarily deferred from participation. How the staff operate these meetings will influence registrants' early impressions and understanding of GAIN, as well as their opportunity for making informed choices in the decision-making process. Moreover, as earlier chapters have shown, the extent to which staff grant deferrals affects the rates of participation in GAIN activities.

The chapter addresses the following research questions: In what ways did staff present information about GAIN to registrants; learn about their individual circumstances, interests, and concerns; and make decisions about their initial program assignment? Why did counties adopt alternative approaches to orientations and appraisals, and what trade-offs were associated with these different approaches? What were the main reasons for granting deferrals? Finally, how did the counties interpret GAIN policies on self-initiated activities? The following sections address each of these questions in turn. The chapter uses data from the MDRC survey of GAIN line staff, field observations of orientation and appraisal meetings,¹ casefile reviews of registrants' activities in GAIN, and field interviews with line staff and administrators.

I. The Orientation and Appraisal Process

Since eligibility workers usually explained very little about GAIN in their meetings with new registrants and potential volunteers (as shown in Chapter 5), orientation and appraisal meetings represented registrants' first significant chance to learn about the program. These meetings also offered GAIN staff their first real opportunity to market the program to registrants in ways that might increase their willingness and desire to participate.

¹MDRC field researchers attended two to five orientations and two to eight appraisals in each county between November 1987 and March 1988 -- roughly twelve to eighteen months after counties had begun operating GAIN.

A. General Features

Orientations were group activities, usually involving eight to twelve registrants.² In most counties they were held in the offices of the GAIN program, typically in rooms that were unadorned, except perhaps with a poster on GAIN or a program flow chart. One county's orientation lasted a full day, but all the others lasted between two and four hours.

In general, orientations in all counties covered a great deal of information. In most counties the staff presented this information by reading aloud the GAIN General Provisions Participant Contract -- a document enumerating GAIN activities and support services; the obligation to participate; the consequences of not participating unless excused for specified reasons; and the mechanisms for contesting GAIN decisions. Each registrant signed a copy of the document, as did a GAIN staff member, to signify that the services, rules, and regulations had been explained and that both the recipient and the welfare department intended to meet their respective obligations.³

Staff also administered the basic education screening test (CASAS) during orientation, which usually took about an hour. They also collected demographic and other information that would later be used in the appraisal meeting when discussing a registrant's initial assignment.

To inform registrants about the child care services available through GAIN, the orientation leaders increasingly relied upon presentations made by staff from the local resource and referral agencies. In some counties these staff had requested greater involvement, pointing out that registrants were not learning enough about the child care available and how the resource and referral agencies could help them find it.⁴

Appraisal immediately followed the orientation in three of the counties. In most other counties, the appraisal was usually scheduled within three weeks after the orientation. In Butte, which maintained a backlog of unassigned orientation attenders to keep staff caseloads low (as explained in Chapter 3), appraisals were usually conducted about three months after the orientation.

Appraisals in all counties consisted of a review of forms and a discussion with participants about the program choices they could make. In these meetings staff member and registrant also

²In Butte and Ventura, staff held a short private meeting with registrants during the orientation, primarily to examine their registration forms, to tell them what documentation they might be required to bring to the appraisal, and sometimes to defer registrants. In Kern the case manager conducted a pre-orientation meeting with the registrant to serve these same functions.

³In mid-1988 SDSS revised the participant contract system, adopting a simplified set of contract forms to be used by the counties.

⁴A separate MDRC report forthcoming in 1989 will examine registrants' knowledge and use of GAIN child care in the eight study counties, based on information from a special survey of registrants.

made decisions on child care, which could include referring the registrant to the local child care resource and referral agency.⁵ In most counties appraisal interviews were also the point at which GAIN staff reviewed and approved or disapproved the programs being pursued by registrants who had already initiated their own activities.

Appraisals usually lasted between thirty minutes and two hours, with an average time of one hour, as shown in Table 7.1. Staff in Fresno conducted appraisals with groups of registrants, and in Stanislaus staff occasionally worked with pairs of registrants.⁶ In all other counties, the staff held individual appraisal meetings with registrants.

B. Topics of Emphasis

As noted at the outset of this chapter, orientation and appraisal meetings provide the first opportunity for GAIN staff to articulate for registrants the focus and tone of the county's GAIN program, for example, by how strongly they emphasize the opportunities GAIN offers versus the program's participation mandate. Orientations and appraisals in all the counties tended to focus on the opportunities offered by GAIN -- its program components and support services -- with notably less emphasis on the obligation to participate or the consequences of not participating without approval. The counties did differ, however, in how much the staff tried to generate enthusiasm about the opportunities. Penalties for noncompliance were usually mentioned only briefly, often in no more than a sentence or two during the orientation. The staff may have deemphasized the penalties in part because, in following up on individuals who did not attend their initially scheduled orientations, they had already made many registrants aware of the participation requirement.

Part of the general emphasis that the county placed on GAIN's opportunities was reflected in how the staff discussed the first choice available to many registrants: whether to enter basic education or a job search activity. According to GAIN regulations, registrants determined to need basic education can choose to enter job search first, but they must enter basic education

⁵In Napa and Ventura, the local child care agency made all the arrangements. In Fresno child care arrangements had to be approved by a social worker at a meeting that took place after the orientation and appraisal.

⁶In Fresno, the three-person orientation team conducted appraisals immediately after the orientation, in small groups. Each group comprised registrants whose self-appraisal forms and CASAS test scores indicated that they would be entering the same general component, such as job search or basic education. Within these groups the staff explained the choices available for each component (such as job club or independent job search), and registrants indicated their choice by signing the appropriate form.

In Stanislaus, members of the intake unit met individually with registrants in the orientation room after the orientation session ended. Occasionally, when two registrants were to be assigned to the same component, workers met with them jointly. Private meeting rooms were available if a registrant's self-appraisal form indicated the necessity of a more personal conversation, such as to discuss family problems as grounds for deferral.

TABLE 7.1

GAIN STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE APPRAISAL PROCESS,
BY COUNTY

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno		Total
								GAIN	EW ^a	
Respondents' Estimate of Average Length of Appraisal Interview (Minutes)	72.6	103.8	86.4	31.2	41.4	38.4	52.2	57.6 ^b		58.2
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:										
"Enough time" is spent with clients during <u>appraisal interview</u>	80%	50%	79%	58%	13%	42%	24%	21%	22%	40%
Staff make a "great deal" of effort to learn about <u>client's family problems</u> in depth	83	56	46	24	0	12	21	14	12	25
Staff make a "great deal" of effort to learn about the <u>client's goals and motivation to work</u> in depth	83	75	79	44	0	30	47	31	20	43
Sample Size	13	19	24	26	15	36	40	30	37	240

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions E1, E2, E3a and E3b.

TABLE 7.1 (continued)

^a "EW" stands for "eligibility workers."

^b This percent represents the average length of the appraisal interview as estimated by GAIN staff and eligibility workers combined.

after job search if they fail to find employment. How strongly staff encouraged registrants to select job search or basic education as their initial activity, and how well staff explained that registrants had the right to make this choice, influenced registrants' initial activity assignment.

Although staff differed across counties in how they presented these choices (discussed below), in most counties they tended to encourage basic education more than job search as the first activity, particularly for AFDC-FG registrants. In field interviews many staff mentioned their belief that basic education was often the better option because many registrants needed basic skills to succeed in the job market, particularly to obtain a job that would pay enough to allow them to support their families.⁷ As one staff member commented:

One man took a \$4.25-an-hour job. He just wanted to work. But he came back when the company closed. I admire the motivation to work for such low pay, but I told him, "Go to school. Maybe we can get you a job that can sustain you and your children." He said he didn't want to, so he will find a 15-hour-a-week job that will keep him off GAIN. Many of them say, "It's too late for me."

As discussed in Chapter 3, many GAIN staff reported on the staff survey that the emphasis in their agency was indeed on raising skill levels and that they personally agreed with that emphasis. In communicating that emphasis in orientations and appraisals, the staff may, in fact, have encouraged more registrants to enter basic education as their first GAIN component than otherwise would have (Table 6.6).⁸

⁷This view was also expressed by the State Department of Social Services in an All County Letter it issued on January 30, 1987, which stated:

The State Department of Social Services recognizes the importance of education in preparing GAIN participants to obtain stable employment. No participant is to be discouraged from obtaining the required remediation before beginning other GAIN activities. Encouragement for obtaining remedial education is especially important when the participant has already delayed education and is reentering the GAIN Program due to loss of employment.

⁸Kern's emphasis differed somewhat from that of the other counties. For example, as reported in Chapter 3, a lower proportion of Kern staff (13 percent) believed that the more important goal of their agency was to raise skill levels than to help registrants obtain employment quickly (see Table 3.8). Kern staff had received written instructions to emphasize job search services, particularly with AFDC-U registrants. Kern's policy may partially explain AFDC-U registrants' considerably higher participation in job search services than in basic education in that county (see Appendix Table G.1), although other factors were undoubtedly relevant as well.

II. Differences in Practices Across Counties

The counties differed to a much greater degree in the scope and style of orientation and appraisal meetings. The next two sections will show that, compared with other counties, those with the smallest staff caseloads -- Napa, San Mateo, and Butte -- conducted more personalized orientations and appraisals that more strongly emphasized participant involvement and choice.

A. Practices in Counties with Low Registrant-Staff Ratios

Orientations in the three counties with low registrant-staff ratios used techniques that evoked active participation from registrants. Napa's orientation, for example, lasted a full day, and all AFDC applicants and recipients -- both mandatory and voluntary registrants -- were required to attend.⁹ Through group exercises the staff sought to build rapport with registrants and encouraged them to express their feelings about being on welfare and entering the labor market. And through "real life" descriptions of individual experiences in GAIN, the staff presented information on such questions as the entrance requirements for training programs, the experiences of past registrants, and the wages graduates had earned. The Napa staff nicknamed their orientation the "barrier basher" because they believed it reduced registrants' resistance and anxieties about participating.

The San Mateo staff used video tapes at orientation as a central tool to educate registrants about GAIN. One ten-minute tape portrayed a GAIN graduate describing her experiences in the program. A second tape discussed child care. Although the tapes were not very detailed and did not present all the particulars in the GAIN participant contract, the important information was conveyed in a pleasant and supportive atmosphere that encouraged participation. (More detailed explanations were saved for the appraisal sessions.) For example, at one meeting observed by field researchers, registrants introduced themselves and described their occupational goals, while the leader interjected comments on how particular GAIN services could be helpful in reaching those goals.

Butte staff, on the other hand, used slides to explain the GAIN contract, instead of reading it aloud. Moreover, the orientation leaders engaged in extensive individual and group discussions with registrants.

Appraisals in these three counties continued the orientations' focus on participant involvement, individual choice, and the registrant's own longer term goals. The appraisals gave additional descriptions of GAIN services, particularly the sequences of services and how these

⁹As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, Napa's GAIN program was unique in its goal to recruit volunteers, as well as to serve the mandatory registrants. Thus, the county required all AFDC applicants and recipients -- mandatory or not, interested in the program or not -- to attend a GAIN orientation. In contrast, other counties referred to orientations only those welfare applicants and recipients who were mandatory or wanted to volunteer; the volunteers were not required to attend.

sequences would, over time, enable registrants to reach their own goals. The discussions emphasized the choices registrants could make at this stage of the program -- for example, between job search and basic education, or between the different types of job search activities.

In general, the staff in these counties made a concerted effort to individualize the GAIN program according to the registrants' circumstances, interests, and capabilities. In discussing the types of jobs registrants could aspire to, staff often prepared a sample household budget to illustrate the wages that a registrant would need to receive to become self-supporting. In San Mateo, where several adult schools offered GAIN services, registrants were sometimes encouraged to visit the different schools to help in deciding which one they would like to attend. The close attention paid to registrants' personal circumstances was further illustrated by the following story related by a case manager:

I had a Spanish father. [He] needed ESL and remediation [basic education], but it was more logical to send him to work than to believe that ESL and remediation would help him. He'd be there until he was a grandfather. So I sent him to job club for three weeks. I said to him he might have difficulty communicating with the job club leader. He said, give me a chance, I'll communicate with her. And I alerted the job club and said, put in some extra effort and find this person a job.

One challenge facing staff in all the counties was the large number of forms that had to be completed and reviewed before authorizing services. In the counties where the staff had smaller caseloads, the staff took the time in appraisals to go beyond what was necessary to process the forms; in fact, they seemed more concerned to develop a broader knowledge of the registrant. In a comment that was typical of the staff in these counties, an appraiser remarked, "the [appraisal] conference is supposed to strengthen our understanding of one another." In another county, staff asked AFDC-U registrants to bring their spouse to the appraisal meeting because, as a staff member explained, "you can learn a lot from the significant other."

Furthermore, the staff sometimes became personally involved in addressing the immediate problems confronting registrants. In one instance, to help a registrant overcome her fears about being in a GED class "full of kids," one case manager arranged carpooling with another older registrant and repeatedly said how delightful this other person was and how much the two of them would like each other.

This close attention to individual circumstances was also evident in the way staff addressed child care issues in Butte and San Mateo. (In Napa, child care arrangements were handled primarily by the local resource and referral agency rather than by GAIN staff in the appraisal interview.) Among other things, the staff probed to determine whether parents understood the differences between licensed care and that which was exempt from licensure (e.g., family care), and whether they had considered some of the implications of their choice of provider. Some staff said it was important to dispel some unfounded rumors parents might have heard about the quality of licensed care. Staff were also concerned that exempt care, if it was chosen, might

strain family relationships and be unstable. The stability of child care arrangements was of concern because the staff hoped to prevent problems that might interfere with the registrant's participation in GAIN activities.

Results from the staff survey clearly indicate that a large percentage of the case managers in Napa, San Mateo, and Butte believed they made a "great deal of effort" to learn about registrants' family problems, goals, and motivation to work as shown in Table 7.1. Most of them also stated that they were spending "enough time" with registrants during appraisals.¹⁰

B. Practices in Counties with Higher Registrant-Staff Ratios

In contrast to the orientations given in Napa, San Mateo, and Butte, the orientation sessions in the five counties with higher registrant-staff ratios primarily consisted of an hour-long reading of the General Provisions Participant Contract. Orientation leaders sometimes elaborated on and illustrated particular points, but the presentations moved apace to cover the entire contract. (Toward the end of the study period these and other counties began to use a revised, shorter contract.)

Because reading the GAIN contract and conducting CASAS testing consumed about two hours, the orientation leaders had little time in the half-day sessions to devote to in-depth descriptions of GAIN services or goals. Moreover, the sessions tended not to evoke questions or discussions. Registrants were an audience that listened but did not actively participate. The leaders generally did not stress registrants' opportunities for choice over their service assignments, and, in some cases, they did not mention it. In some of the counties, registrants were told that most of them would be going to job club or basic education based on predetermined assignment rules; in effect, they were being advised not to expect much choice. MDRC field researchers observed that any marketing of GAIN was accomplished with only modest efforts to elicit enthusiasm; the program was often presented simply as a regular part of being on welfare, just as reporting monthly income was required behavior.

Consistent with these relatively standardized, impersonal orientation sessions, the appraisal interviews focused directly on the immediate decisions that needed to be made for the registrant, rather than on longer term employment goals or setting the stage for an ongoing relationship. Typically, the staff member reviewed forms showing the registrant's education, work history, CASAS scores, living situation, and problems that might necessitate a deferral. Discussion usually focused on obtaining missing information or information relevant only to the registrant's initial assignment. In some cases workers did not maintain eye contact with registrants because they were completing forms throughout the interview, according to MDRC observers.

Although the GAIN model limited registrants' opportunities for choice over initial services, discussion of the choices that were available was often limited. The policy of one agency was not to highlight for registrants determined to need basic education that job search was another

¹⁰For actual wording of survey questions, see Appendix C, questions E2 and E3.

option. In other counties, staff took a variety of approaches to the issue of registrant choice, but in general workload pressures discouraged them from engaging in in-depth discussions with registrants. When staff did offer registrants a choice, they seldom offered much description of the services or the advantages of each option, and they seldom attempted to help the registrant think through the criteria that might be used in making the choice. A typical comment by a case manager at the beginning of an appraisal was: "You are here to be scheduled for a GED." Choices posed were sometimes accompanied by strong recommendations by the worker that may have discouraged further exploration by the registrant, such as: "Most people do not choose job club when they get this contract." Similarly, case managers tended to accept the registrant's stated preference for child care without probing into whether the registrant had considered the trade-offs among various options.

In many cases the staff did not discuss the registrant's own longer term goals or the later components and sequences of GAIN. One appraisal worker explained:

I don't want to discourage clients from what they are working on now. Then you're not using the component. I sell each component individually. I don't sell it until they get there.

The responses of the staff in these counties to the survey questions about appraisals support the characterization drawn from the field research. As shown in Table 7.1, in most of the counties where staff had larger caseloads, only a minority of staff -- in some cases, a very small minority -- strongly believed that they were spending "enough time" with registrants during appraisals. In none of these counties did more than a minority of staff strongly believe that they were making a "great deal" of effort to learn about registrants' family problems or their goals and motivation to work. Again, these findings stand in sharp contrast to those reported earlier for staff responses in the three counties with the lowest registrant-staff ratios.

C. Factors Influencing the Different Practices

The two different approaches to orientation and appraisal in the counties studied -- one emphasizing more in-depth exploration of issues and the other stressing more routine processing of registrants -- reflect more than the different registrant-staff ratios of the counties. They also reflect different conceptions of how best to operate this stage of GAIN.

The view promulgated in the counties where staff had the smallest caseloads was that a more personal approach to the appraisal would increase the registrants' motivation and give them someone at the GAIN office they could turn to if they encountered a problem. In addition, since the staff in these counties had more time to conduct appraisals, they also had a greater chance to work with registrants who initially were uncommitted to the program. Initial resistance was not uncommon among registrants throughout the counties studied. Staff in both sets of counties often reported in field interviews that many registrants resisted job search and basic education services and wanted vocational training instead. "I have to tell them that they flunked the CASAS and are going to remediation and I almost lose them at step one," said one staff member. With fewer cases, and thus less paperwork to attend to, the staff in Napa, San

Mateo, and Butte could engage registrants in an extended dialogue about the value of the initial components, perhaps enhancing their interest and commitment.

The alternative view, most commonly expressed in the five counties with higher registrant-staff ratios, was that GAIN is a prescriptive program with assignment rules that do not initially allow much worker discretion or much registrant choice. Instead of expending scarce staff resources to exploit these limited opportunities to the fullest, administrators and staff in these counties sought an efficient appraisal mechanism through which decisions about registrants could be made almost automatically based on easily ascertainable data. This view held that the county would thereby be able to bring registrants into the program quickly, while saving scarce resources for other purposes, which could include serving a larger share of the eligible population.

Different case management systems across the counties also reinforced the different staff practices in orientation and appraisal meetings. In the three counties with the lowest registrant-staff ratios, orientations and appraisals were led by case managers who were responsible for registrants at all the different stages of GAIN, whereas in most of the other counties they were led by specialized intake staff.¹¹ When generalist case managers conducted the sessions, they could draw on their broad set of experiences with registrants who had already been through the program (for instance, giving examples of how other registrants viewed their adult school classes or job club sessions) and address, in a detailed and personal way, the concerns and questions of new registrants. In contrast, the specialized staff who conducted only orientations or appraisals had fewer experiences they could share with registrants at orientation and appraisal sessions.

In addition, since the generalist case managers expected to have an ongoing relationship with registrants, they had a greater incentive than the specialized staff to probe into registrants' attitudes and personal circumstances during the appraisal, which would better allow them to plan for registrants' participation in GAIN and anticipate their future problems and needs.¹² The specialized intake staff, in contrast, could expect to have very little interaction with registrants once they entered GAIN components. As a result, the specialized staff had less incentive to initiate a relationship with the registrant at the appraisal and thus had a greater incentive to focus on immediate decisionmaking.

Despite the considerable differences in orientation and appraisal practices across the counties studied, there is no clear evidence in this study indicating that these practices produced

¹¹In Fresno, the staff who led orientations also conducted appraisals. Santa Clara and Stanislaus assigned specialized intake personnel to orientations and appraisals. Two eligibility workers in Kern led orientations, while generalist case managers conducted appraisals. In Ventura, generalist case managers handled appraisals and rotated the responsibility for leading orientation sessions among themselves.

¹²Although the generalist staff in Kern conducted appraisals, they undoubtedly had less incentive to learn about registrants than their counterparts in other counties, since the Kern staff had very high registrant-staff ratios.

major differences in rates of participation in GAIN activities across the counties. For example, the rates of participation in GAIN activities among orientation attenders in Napa and San Mateo -- the counties with particularly low registrant-staff ratios -- were similar to participation rates observed in Kern and Santa Clara, where the registrant-staff ratios were much higher. (See Table 6.2 and Appendix Table G.1.) Nor were intercounty differences in participation in particular GAIN components consistent with the intercounty differences in orientation and appraisal practices. Whether the different practices influenced registrants' choices of future activities or their attendance patterns is uncertain at this point in the evaluation.

III. Deferral Patterns

The decision to defer registrants is an important outcome of the appraisal interview; and, as earlier chapters showed, deferrals had a substantial effect on participation rates. For example, 42 percent of AFDC-FG orientation attenders and 33 percent of AFDC-U orientation attenders were deferred within the four-month period following their orientation. (See Table 6.1) Most deferrals were granted at the appraisal interview rather than after entry into a program activity. Moreover, as Chapter 6 showed, almost all registrants who were deferred remained in that status at least through the end of the four-month follow-up period. Deferrals thus were a major route out of the GAIN program; and although they were intended to be only temporary, many deferrals were relatively long-lasting.

A. Reasons for Deferrals

Table 7.2 presents data on the reasons for deferrals recorded in casefiles of orientation attenders who were deferred at some point within the four months following their orientation. (Refer to Appendix Table A.1 for a listing of the permissible reasons for deferral from GAIN.) Employment of 15 or more hours per week was the most common reason for deferral, accounting for about 40 percent of deferrals among mandatory registrants. The relatively high benefit levels in California that allow registrants to take part-time work and still receive AFDC no doubt contributed to the large number of recipients who held employment. (The number would predictably be lower in states with lower benefit levels.) A number of GAIN staff told of registrants who chose to take part-time jobs (but not leave welfare) to avoid having to participate in GAIN activities. The extent to which deferred registrants actually became employed for this reason or were continuing in jobs obtained prior to registration could not be determined in this study.

After part-time work, the next most common reason for deferrals among mandatory registrants was an illness that could be verified. This reason accounted for 25 percent of the deferrals among AFDC-FG mandatory registrants and 17 percent among AFDC-U registrants. "Severe family crisis" was the third most frequent deferral reason, accounting for around 15 percent of deferrals among mandatory registrants. All together, these three reasons -- employment, illness, and family crisis -- accounted for the vast majority of all deferrals: 80 percent among AFDC-FG mandatory registrants and 72 percent among AFDC-U registrants. Fewer than 3 percent of all deferrals were due to a lack of child care.

TABLE 7.2

DISTRIBUTION OF DEFERRAL REASONS AND AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT IN DEFERRAL STATUS,
FOR ORIENTATION ATTENDERS WHO WERE DEFERRED WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION,
BY GAIN STATUS AND ASSISTANCE CATEGORY

Deferral Reason	Mandatory Registrants				Voluntary Registrants	
	AFDC-FG		AFDC-U		AFDC-FG	
	Percent Deferred	Average Number of Days Deferred	Percent Deferred	Average Number of Days Deferred	Percent Deferred	Average Number of Days Deferred
In School, Child Under Six	5.3%	103	0.4%	43	0.0%	0
Alcoholism or Drug Addiction	1.6	49	4.3	59	0.0	0
Emotional or Mental Problems	5.5	70	5.0	63	2.5	16
Legal Difficulties	3.5	48	10.7	70	5.0	11
No Legal Right to Work in the United States	2.7	111	3.4	102	0.0	0
Severe Family Crisis	15.6	83	14.6	65	41.6	54
Good Standing in Union	0.0	0	2.0	113	0.0	0
Temporarily Laid Off With Call Back Date	4.0	84	7.6	66	0.0	0
Employed 15 Hours or More Per Week	39.0	82	40.3	78	40.0	59
Medically Verified Illness	24.7	74	17.2	66	7.3	78
No Child Care	2.7	49	0.6	99	8.5	57
No Transportation	7.3	79	6.3	95	4.8	121
Sample Size	265		175		25	

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these calculations because of unavailable data.

All percentage calculations and averages are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row.

Distributions may add to more than 100.0 percent because registrants could be deferred more than once for different reasons. Included here are reasons for the first, second, and third deferral.

Deferral rates varied widely across the study counties. Ventura and Stanislaus had the highest rates, deferring more than half of their AFDC-FG orientation attenders within four months, whereas Butte deferred only 24 percent of its orientation attenders. (See Table 6.2.) This variation partly reflects differences in labor markets and in the populations served by the counties. But it may also reflect differences in staff practices, as is suggested by the intercounty variation in those deferral reasons that involved more staff discretion, such as "severe family crisis." For example, in Ventura and Kern this reason accounted for about 10 percent of the deferrals among AFDC-FG mandatory orientation attenders, whereas in San Mateo it accounted for 48 percent of deferrals among members of this group (Appendix Tables H.1 and H.2). These differences may have had a variety of causes, but they do raise the possibility that the staff were applying different standards across counties.

In fact, GAIN workers' descriptions of how they made deferral decisions pointed out differences both within and across counties. In field interviews staff generally described deferrals as being made on a "case-by-case basis" and as a "gray area" that required "social work skills." A worker in one county said she tried not to defer on the grounds of a family crisis because "people have a life to live. They can't be bedridden." In another county a staff member reported believing she should grant deferrals freely because when registrants went back to school, it was a hard adjustment for both them and their families. Supervisors in a third county pointed out that given registrants in similar circumstances, some staff would rely on conciliation procedures (sending warning letters), while others would grant deferrals. All told, the field interviews indicated a lack of consensus about when deferrals were appropriate.

Registrants were sometimes deferred for reasons that were not among the program's official deferral criteria. Stanislaus, for example, had difficulty arranging for basic education when many schools closed during the summer months. The staff therefore used deferrals as a holding tank which partly explains the county's high deferral rate. Since GAIN offers no formal status for registrants who are temporarily inactive for reasons other than their own personal situation or problems, deferral status was sometimes used as an alternative.

B. Duration of Deferrals

GAIN regulations allow counties to defer registrants for up to six months at a time. Among orientation attenders who were deferred during the four-month follow-up period, the average duration of the deferrals was 83 days among AFDC-FG registrants and 79 days among AFDC-U registrants. Nevertheless, because most deferred registrants in this sample were still in deferred status at the end of the follow-up period, these averages underestimate the actual length of deferrals; the eventual duration is uncertain. Table 7.2 shows that deferrals for part-time work, verified illness, and severe family crisis -- the three most common deferral reasons -- resulted in equally lengthy deferrals during the follow-up period.

Depending on their caseload pressures, the staff varied across counties in the extent to which they became actively involved with deferred registrants. In the counties with lower registrant-staff ratios, case managers appeared to be spending more time trying to locate

community resources for deferred registrants that required help and to be getting in touch with these registrants on a more regular basis. In one such county, for example, case managers were calling every two months those registrants who had taken part-time work to see whether they were still working and discuss whether they would like to reconsider entering GAIN. When field researchers asked case managers in these counties about their "active" caseload, they tended to mention, in the words of one of them: "You have to include the deferrals. They're as much work as anyone else."

In most of the counties with high registrant-staff ratios, the staff rarely had the chance to contact deferred registrants until their deferral had expired. "My caseload is too big for that," one worker said. In addition, staff received mixed signals about how much help to offer registrants who needed social services. A staff member in one large county, for example, was spending a considerable amount of time trying to find help for a troubled family with multiple needs. But she reported that she "could say it was a deferral and forget it" because administrators did not want staff to get "that far involved." Workers in counties with higher registrant-staff ratios sometimes referred registrants to other community resources, but they seldom followed up on those referrals to insure that the registrants had received the services they needed. In contrast, the staff in smaller caseload counties were more likely to follow up on those kinds of referrals.

In one county, administrators who had grown concerned about the high rate and overall length of deferrals instituted new procedures requiring that supervisors approve all requests for a second deferral. Their intent, they reported, was to control the length of deferrals, not to limit the case manager's initial discretion in granting deferrals, which, in a high proportion of cases, were based on verified information and legitimate reasons.

C. Deferral Rates Among Subgroups of Registrants

As noted previously, AFDC-FG mandatory registrants had somewhat higher deferral rates than AFDC-U registrants. In general, within each of these two groups the probability of being deferred at appraisal did not vary dramatically among registrants with different background characteristics.¹³ For example, there was very little difference among AFDC applicants and recipients, or between registrants who had been employed in the two years before their GAIN registration and those who had not been employed over that period. The most notable subgroup finding is that AFDC-FG mandatory registrants with limited English-speaking ability were more likely to be deferred than registrants without this characteristic (50 percent versus 33 percent).¹⁴ These deferrals were much more often due to reasons other than part-time employment.

¹³This analysis was conducted using a subset of the background characteristics listed in Table 2.5.

¹⁴For each population group this analysis examined the proportion of registrants for whom deferral was the first GAIN "activity."

IV. Decisions on Self-Initiated Programs

At the appraisal interview not only do staff make decisions on deferral and the first activity assignment, but they also approve or disapprove any self-initiated activity. In order not to disrupt the education and training registrants may already be enrolled in, GAIN rules allow registrants to continue in self-initiated activities for up to two years if they are in preparation for an occupation in demand in the locality. GAIN does not fund self-initiated education and training programs, but the program does pay for support services for registrants in approved programs. As Chapter 6 noted, among mandatory registrants who attended orientation, 14 percent of the AFDC-FG and 7 percent of the AFDC-U registrants participated in self-initiated education or training.¹⁵ In contrast, 39 percent of the voluntary registrants who attended orientation were in self-initiated programs.

Most GAIN staff across the counties readily approved registrants' self-initiated programs. Case managers normally required that registrants document their participation and that the school certify (or have indicated in its course catalog) that the program could be completed within two years. Issues of approval arose when registrants had already received grants or loans for proprietary courses offering training in occupations that were not in demand. Numerous staff reported that in these cases it would be unfair to make registrants discontinue training for which they were already indebted, although this was done in a few cases.

Another policy issue that arose in some counties was how to define a self-initiated registrant. For example, should registrants be considered self-initiated if they entered a program between the time of their referral to GAIN and their orientation date, or between their orientation date and appraisal? Is it necessary for registrants to have already enrolled or started attending a program, or is it acceptable for them to have merely expressed an intent to enroll by signing an application form? Another issue was whether staff should encourage registrants, particularly volunteers, to self-initiate, which might allow them to avoid the initial basic education and job search requirements and instead enter skills training sooner. In general, outside training agencies tried to encourage looser definitions of self-initiated registrants. This was particularly true in one large county where a competition to recruit self-initiated registrants had developed among training providers who had held a number of slots open for GAIN registrants but could not fill them because of the relatively small number of registrants who were entering post-assessment components.

Finally, an additional concern in some counties was that recruiters from training agencies

¹⁵More than two-fifths of self-initiated registrants were in community college programs, one-quarter in private schools, and one-seventh in four-year colleges. Two-thirds of those pursuing secondary education programs were in community colleges; the remaining one-third were in four-year colleges. Two-thirds of those pursuing training programs were in private schools, and about one-fifth were in community colleges. About two-thirds of the self-initiated registrants were still active in their program at the end of the four-month follow-up period.

were approaching registrants in the parking lots and hallways of income maintenance and GAIN offices to offer services that would be funded by grants and loans. Those recruiters went so far as to market the support services that GAIN offered, in the hope of extending additional inducements to enter their programs. Staff reported that registrants who signed up for programs under these circumstances did not always understand the contracts they were signing or the indebtedness they would be shouldering. In addition, they were sometimes being steered to courses they did not have the skills to complete or they were receiving inferior training.

V. Summary

This chapter has shown that the counties adopted alternative approaches to orientations and appraisals. In most of the counties with higher registrant-staff ratios, the GAIN staff conducted orientations in a manner that generally did not evoke discussion or questions from registrants. Moreover, appraisals in these counties tended to focus on the immediate decisions that needed to be made for registrants. Many registrants may thus have been left with a hazy understanding of the program and the impression that GAIN is a bureaucratic necessity of being on welfare rather than an opportunity.

In the three counties with the lowest registrant-staff ratios, GAIN was presented at orientations in a more engaging fashion that prompted more questions and discussion from registrants. These staff also tended to conduct longer appraisals in which they explored registrants' career ambitions and life circumstances in greater depth and described program options more fully. This appeared to foster more informed registrant choice, but it required more staff time.

The two different approaches to appraisals reflect a trade-off in the use of resources. While the second approach seems better suited to insuring that registrants understand their options in GAIN and how the program can work for them, the first approach permits a county to process a higher volume of registrants with a given investment of staff resources. The evidence in this report does not indicate that one approach is more likely than the other to lead to higher rates of participation in GAIN activities.

This chapter has also explored the reasons for deferrals, which are most commonly granted at appraisal. It showed that mandatory registrants were most frequently deferred for part-time employment, medically verified illness, and "severe family crisis." The use of deferrals varied widely across the study counties, reflecting differences in labor markets and populations, and perhaps the application of different interpretations of GAIN policies. Deferrals tended to be relatively long-lasting, and the counties varied in the closeness with which they monitored registrants in this status. The standards for granting deferrals, the duration of deferrals, and the staff resources devoted to monitoring deferrals all affect participation rates in GAIN activities. Reducing the number and duration of deferrals would increase participation in activities, but would also entail greater costs for monitoring services.

The interpretation of GAIN's policies on self-initiated activities also emerged as an

important issue in several of the study counties. Staff acknowledged that they sometimes faced difficult choices in applying these policies, such as in deciding whether to encourage some registrants to become self-initiated to avoid GAIN's initial job search and basic education requirement, or whether to approve courses not in demand areas when the registrant had already shouldered the cost of the course. Some also expressed concern over the actions of recruiters from proprietary training schools, who sought to enroll GAIN registrants in their programs. Often registrants did not understand the financial commitment they might be incurring or the adequacy of the training they were being offered.

CHAPTER 8

ONGOING CASE MANAGEMENT

In addition to their involvement in orientation, appraisal, and later career assessment, GAIN case managers' responsibilities are to monitor registrants' participation in the activities to which they have been assigned; to help and encourage registrants to sustain their participation; and, when appropriate, to administer penalties for noncompliance.¹ These functions are necessary to meet the continuous participation requirement in the GAIN legislation and to help registrants take advantage of the opportunities GAIN offers.

This chapter addresses the following research questions: What arrangements did GAIN staff establish with basic education and vocational education and training providers to monitor registrants' attendance? What kinds of contacts did GAIN staff have with registrants themselves to encourage their attendance? Did GAIN case managers respond to attendance problems on a timely basis? How did GAIN staff use the official means of enforcing participation called for in the GAIN legislation: conciliation, money management, and sanctioning? What factors influenced staff practices in each of these areas? And finally, what were the implications for case management and program management of the counties' minimally automated information systems? The chapter focuses on ongoing case management for registrants involved in basic education and vocational education and training because these were the longer term GAIN activities used most frequently during the study period. These components presented staff with a much greater monitoring challenge than did short-term job search.

The chapter illustrates the difficulties the early-starting counties had in fostering continuous participation in GAIN. Indeed, the low rates of continuous participation reported in Chapter 6 can be attributed in part to these case management difficulties.² However, as the chapter also shows, the counties learned from their early experiences and began instituting changes in their

¹Staff practices in conducting orientation and appraisal meetings are discussed in Chapter 7; developing longer term career plans is discussed in Chapter 10.

²Several observations demonstrate that many registrants participated erratically or not at all in their assigned GAIN activities and underscore the importance of careful case management for achieving GAIN's ongoing participation mandate. Chapter 6 showed, for example, that less than 20 percent of all AFDC-FG and AFDC-U mandatory registrants who attended orientation remained active in GAIN for most of the days they were "available" for participation, and that periods of non-participation could not be fully accounted for by deferrals and deregistrations. Moreover, on the staff survey 35 percent of respondents said that staff in their agency "very frequently" encountered registrants who did not regularly attend their basic education or vocational training classes. For the actual wording of the survey question, see Appendix C, question H13b.

case management practices based on their knowledge of what had not worked well.

The information presented in this chapter is based on the MDRC survey of GAIN line staff and on field interviews with GAIN line staff, administrators, and service providers in the eight counties.

I. Monitoring Registrants' Ongoing Participation

One important function of ongoing case management is learning, on a timely basis, whether or not registrants are regularly and effectively participating in their assigned activities. One way to accomplish this monitoring is to establish formal reporting relationships with schools and other service providers. Developing these relationships is complicated, however, by GAIN's continuous participation requirement, particularly for the longer term activities such as basic education and skills training. Since many registrants remain in these activities for many months, and sometimes for more than a year, attendance reporting must operate continuously over a long period. In the larger counties developing efficient communications with service providers is an even more complex task for GAIN staff. As one administrator from a large county commented:

In a little county with one adult school, GAIN is very easy: You put the client in that school. We have seven adult schools, seven community colleges -- so many resources in the community that it is just much more complicated for us to develop relationships with all these agencies.

The monitoring relationships the eight counties developed with adult education schools were very different from those they developed with agencies providing vocational education or training, as the rest of this section will show.

A. Developing Monitoring Relationships with Basic Education Providers

As one measure of the nature of the monitoring relationships GAIN staff formed with basic education providers, the MDRC survey of staff asked how long, on average, it would take them to learn from a school that a registrant assigned to basic education had never attended a class. Table 8.1 shows that, among staff surveyed in all eight counties, over half indicated timely reporting: 27 percent said it would take a week or less, and 25 percent said it would take up to two weeks. The responses differed considerably across counties, however. For example, the proportion of county staff who reported they would learn about the problem within one week ranging from 0 percent to 82 percent. Thus some county staff (especially those in Napa, Ventura, and Kern) reported having developed very timely monitoring arrangements with basic education providers, whereas others had much less timely arrangements.

Those county staffs that developed timely monitoring did so by placing much of the burden for reporting on the education providers. Typically, a clerk at the adult school would notify the GAIN case managers on a daily or weekly basis -- through telephone calls or paper records --

TABLE 8.1

GAIN STAFF ESTIMATES OF LENGTH OF TIME TO LEARN ABOUT NONATTENDANCE IN PROGRAM ACTIVITIES,
BY COUNTY

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno		Total
								GAIN	EW ^B	
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:										
For registrant assigned to <u>basic education</u> but never attended, average number of weeks for staff to learn about this from service provider:										
One week or less	82%	38%	8%	72%	47%	0%	17%	12%	16%	27%
Two weeks	9	13	17	24	47	29	25	35	25	25
Not likely to find out	0	6	4	0	7	5	0	0	0	2
For registrant assigned to <u>vocational education or training</u> but never attended, average number of weeks for staff to learn about this from service provider:										
One week or less	90	19	5	17	21	0	15	4	9	15
Two weeks	0	38	35	18	14	30	32	42	31	29
Not likely to find out	0	6	5	26	21	5	3	8	3	8
Sample Size	13	19	24	26	15	36	40	30	37	240

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions H6A and H6B.

^a "EW" stands for "eligibility workers."

if any registrants had not attended classes. Through these arrangements even staff with large caseloads could learn about absences very quickly. In Kern, for example, where registrant-staff ratios averaged about 225, case managers almost always had up-to-date information on how regularly their registrants were participating in basic education. Over 90 percent of the staff in Kern reported that they would learn within one or two weeks that an assigned registrant never showed up at the school (Table 8.1); moreover, they would also learn, through daily telephone calls from the school, which registrants who had begun a course were not attending regularly.

Another approach to monitoring is to give the greater share of the burden to the GAIN case managers. This approach was to evolve in Ventura, where the GAIN staff usually visited the adult schools at least once a week to collect attendance information directly from the teachers and to meet with teachers and students to discuss any problems that had arisen. On-site visits would not be feasible, however, in counties with high registrant-staff ratios.

The less timely monitoring relationships were approaches that GAIN staff in several counties judged to be ineffective; in fact, some of the counties that had relied on these approaches began to revise them during the study period. Fresno's GAIN staff, for example, came to recognize how difficult it is for a large county to rely on a paper reporting system when many different adult schools are serving GAIN registrants, and when the reporting process involves several different administrative units or agencies. Under the initial arrangements in Fresno, paper forms followed a circuitous route from teacher to the school's administration to the County Office of Education to the welfare department's eligibility workers who monitored GAIN registrants in basic education. This cumbersome system led the eligibility workers to complain that they were getting reports that were five or six weeks out of date. To improve the system, the county later computerized much of the reporting process. Under the new system the County Office of Education sent eligibility workers weekly monitoring reports and maintained a computer file with information on the current status of GAIN registrants, which eligibility workers could retrieve through computer terminals at the welfare office.

The GAIN staff in Stanislaus had trouble with a system that placed the burden for monitoring largely on the registrants themselves. For a substantial period Stanislaus had subcontracted most of the monitoring process to an intermediary organization. This agency received referral lists from the GAIN program by mail, matched registrants to schools, and informed the registrant by mail about where and when to begin basic education. The agency also sent registrants postcards to be signed by their instructors when they first entered their classes. The registrants were supposed to mail the postcards back to the intermediary agency, but many failed to do so. The agency was then to report the placement to the GAIN staff. These arrangements worked so poorly, according to the staff, that GAIN case managers usually did not know how regularly registrants were attending their classes. These problems help to explain why the orientation attenders in Stanislaus participated in basic education (and other GAIN components) at a lower rate than orientation attenders in most of the other seven counties. Although the GAIN staff made some adjustments in this system as time passed, they ultimately decided not to renew this monitoring contract and planned to implement a new system in which the staff would have a direct relationship with the adult schools.

The experiences of Fresno and Stanislaus illustrate the evolutionary nature of the process of developing monitoring relationships with adult schools. Throughout the eight counties the GAIN staff had to tighten their initial procedures for reporting on attendance, usually after many months of experience had shown that more timely reporting of absences would be essential for achieving GAIN's ongoing participation mandate. Moreover, instituting changes to improve communications took time, requiring in many cases a series of meetings between GAIN and school staffs to discuss the weaknesses of the original system, learn about each other's needs and available resources, and consider the trade-offs of alternative approaches.³

While attendance is the essential ingredient of ongoing participation, case managers also monitored registrants' performance in basic education. Performance monitoring was usually a much less formal process, and had a lower priority for GAIN staff than attendance monitoring. Case managers had an easier time monitoring registrants' performance in Napa and in one GAIN office in Ventura, where adult school classes were co-located with the GAIN office, allowing case managers to visit the schools on a regular basis. Learning about registrants' performance has been much more difficult in the larger counties with multiple basic education providers and much higher registrant-staff ratios, conditions that limit direct interactions between the GAIN staff and the teaching staff.

B. Developing Monitoring Relationships with Vocational Education and Training Providers

In contrast to their arrangements with adult schools, GAIN offices developed much less formal arrangements with vocational education and training providers, such as community colleges and commercial vocational institutes. Instructors at many of these schools often did not take daily attendance, and some reportedly did not feel obligated to complete monthly forms for GAIN. Instead, the registrants in these vocational activities -- for example, most self-initiated registrants -- often were simply given attendance forms to have their instructors sign. They were also expected to report their course selections and grades to their case managers. The assumption was that registrants who were self-initiated or who had a chance to choose a vocational program would be more motivated than those in other components, and intensive monitoring would therefore not be necessary. Some staff also reported that some of the self-initiated registrants resented their welfare reciprocity being called to the attention of their instructors and their schools.

³Partly because of the level of effort required to institute changes, the quality of reporting relationships at times varied across schools and even across classrooms within the same school during the early period of implementing GAIN. For example, the GAIN staff in one county, after about a year of operating the program, agreed with the GED teachers of one adult school to change their arrangements for reporting attendance from a monthly to a daily system. In this school one GED teacher told a field researcher that the GAIN staff were "in constant contact with us." In contrast, an ESL teacher within the same school said she did not receive regular calls from GAIN and never called the case managers herself.

All told, these arrangements did not work well. The GAIN staff in a number of the counties said that the registrants did not return attendance forms on a regular basis. In several counties the staff acknowledged that if a registrant dropped out of training, months would often pass before they learned of the situation.

The staff survey asked how quickly the GAIN staff were learning of registrants who had not shown up for vocational education or training courses to which they had been assigned. As Table 8.1 shows, only 15 percent of the respondents said that staff would learn about this situation in a week or less, whereas 27 percent gave this response for basic education. In only one county, Napa, did the staff indicate having a timely reporting relationship with the vocational providers. Moreover, in two counties, Ventura and Kern, over 20 percent reported that staff were "not likely find out" at all about this attendance problem.

The GAIN staff also reported that these monitoring arrangements have failed to provide some registrants with the level of support they need. Some registrants, for example, selected courses for which they did not have the background to succeed and then performed poorly in those courses or dropped out.

To improve the monitoring of attendance in vocational education and training programs, and to give the registrants more assistance once they entered those programs, several county GAIN offices adopted more formal monitoring arrangements with service providers. In Napa, for example, GAIN administrators arranged with the local community college to have one of its staff members who had already worked in a special program for low-income students serve as the GAIN case manager for all registrants in courses at the college. Similarly, the Fresno GAIN program reached an agreement with Fresno City College to develop an on-site service center whose staff would meet registrants "at the front door," advise them on courses, show them how to get to class, track their participation, and offer counseling. GAIN staff in Ventura, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties were also establishing liaisons with colleges or on-site GAIN counselors at the colleges during the later months of the study period.

II. Developing Relationships with Registrants to Encourage Their Participation

Ongoing case management requires not only that the GAIN staff learn about attendance and progress from service providers, but also that they stay in touch with registrants. Indeed, the staff viewed their ongoing interactions with registrants as essential to meeting the continuous participation requirement because many registrants had numerous problems that could interfere with their participation -- in other words, problems that demanded personal attention. One case manager described a view of registrants that was common across the counties studied:

Some are motivated and interested. They are driven to complete their education. The others are not rejecting services; it's just that with all the problems in their lives, they can't stay on top of it. They have a transportation problem. If there is no one to contact at welfare to get that problem resolved, that might be the end of the

program for them. I get a lot of problems with child care. Even when the child is going to school so the parent doesn't need child care help, if the child gets sick, the parent can't go to school. And if you have lots of little kids, they get little colds all the time. Often you have to call the client[s] in and help them arrange their situation so they don't get thrown by some minor obstacle.

A case manager in another county noted:

For my clients, there are three basic reasons [for poor attendance]: interrupted child care, which frequently happens; a breakdown in transportation; and medical problems.

Differences among registrants in the regularity of their participation have produced considerable variation in the intensity of staff involvement with them. Some registrants require little attention, while others need a great deal. As one case manager explained:

Some clients are very independent, very motivated and well prepared. They know what they want. My relationship with them is that they send me a list of receipts and lists of required books and I process that. Or they contact me when things change or at the beginning of each semester. Other people I contact once a month; I may drop them a line saying, "Your attendance or your report was really great, and keep up the good work." Or when something goes wrong, I try to reassure them and tell them that the GAIN program will be there for them when they can do it. These are really the clients who are most gratifying to work with because a relationship with a case manager can be really important to them and can help them get through the program. Then there are those who are refusing to participate -- they either drop out early, maybe take a 15-hour-a-week job rather than participate, or they're heading into money management and sanctioning.

The following example from another county illustrates the level of effort necessary to work with some registrants who have problems participating:

The registrant called the case manager and explained that he had missed two remediation classes and that he was still sick. He was told to get a doctor's note and call the class instructor. He was deferred. When the deferral was up, the case manager sent a letter asking him to call her, leave a message, or come to the GAIN office. He did not respond and was sent a Participation Problem Notice. He then called and explained he had a new address. He was given one week to provide documentation showing that he had returned to school, which he did. A short time later, his wife broke her ankle.

This led him to miss school again, which was only discovered when the school reported his absence. At a later point, he and his wife went to Texas because of a death in the family, which the case manager learned from his eligibility worker.

As these examples show, encouraging continuous participation to the fullest extent possible requires a wide variety of responses from GAIN staff -- identifying the problem, defining alternative solutions, counseling, cajoling, and in some cases simply expressing interest and concern -- to ensure that temporary problems do not discourage participation over the long term. As the next sections will show, GAIN case managers first relied on this variety of approaches before turning to money management and sanctioning; they encouraged participation first, and only in failing to achieve it resorted to enforcing participation.

III. The Timeliness of Staff Responses to Participation Problems

Once GAIN staff learn about a participation problem, the speed with which they respond can make an important difference in the registrant's ultimate participation. More specifically, some registrants may decide to participate more regularly if they have to explain their absences to a case manager. Others may need the help in finding child care or paying for transportation -- or simply the encouragement -- that a case manager can provide. On the other hand, if a month has gone by before the case manager learns about an attendance problem, and the case manager then takes another month to contact the registrant, the two will be talking about a past situation rather than addressing the problem as it is occurring.

The eight counties varied in the timeliness of staff responses to participation problems once they became aware of them. In counties with relatively low registrant-staff ratios, the GAIN staff intervened fairly quickly. A case manager in one of these counties illustrated his typical response:

If a volunteer [registrant] is gone [from an activity] for three days, I will call. Mandatories I am more stringent about. I will call after a day, unless they have been doing well -- then I give them some latitude.

In the counties with higher registrant-staff ratios, the reaction time was slower. Kern, which had the highest ratio of the eight counties studied, represents the extreme. As several case managers in Kern explained, even though they received attendance reports from the adult school on a daily basis, they could not respond quickly: often several weeks would pass before they would send a Problem Participation Notice to a truant registrant. One staff member commented, "This is really low on my priority list." He further explained that even after he sent a notice, several more weeks would usually pass before he could meet with the registrant about the problem. Another case manager in Kern said that he attempted to reach truant registrants only after they had missed at least half of their classes.

The counties also differed widely in the timeliness of staff responses to performance problems among registrants. Staff were asked on the survey how likely the GAIN staff in their office were to contact -- by the end of a month -- registrants who attended basic education but exhibited poor motivation or performance. As shown in Table 8.2, those answering "very likely" ranged from 16 percent of the eligibility workers in Fresno to 91 percent of the GAIN staff in Napa. The staff in the three counties that had the lowest registrant-staff ratios (Napa, San Mateo, and Butte), and in Ventura, where one of the adult schools was co-located with the GAIN office, were those most likely to indicate a timely response. A similar pattern (but to a lesser extent in Ventura) was evident in the answers to a comparable question about registrants in vocational education and training (also in Table 8.2).

Another difference among counties was in the extent to which staff made "preventive" calls on registrants, for instance, to offer them encouragement or to learn about, and possibly help resolve, potential situations that could threaten their continued participation. For example, one item on the staff survey asked how often staff in the agency would call or meet one-on-one with registrants who were not exhibiting participation problems "just to maintain contact," and the proportion of respondents answering "very often" ranged from 0 percent to 75 percent (Table 8.2). Yet again, the staff in the three counties with the lowest registrant-staff ratios were more likely to initiate these preventive measures than the staff in other counties.

Thus, although the earlier sections of this chapter showed that even staff with larger caseloads could learn about attendance problems quickly if much of the responsibility for attendance reporting was placed on the service provider, the results just reported suggest that large caseloads still pose difficulties in responding promptly to attendance problems and in preventing attendance problems. As a more extreme illustration, a case manager in Kern noted:

One social worker doing 230 cases is pushing it. With fewer cases, we could do more home calls, visits to sites, and push some of these clients to do more. With 230 cases, you're stuck to your desk.

The results also suggest that the co-location of education and training services with the GAIN office (which would be more problematic in large counties) is another factor that can influence the timeliness of staff responses to truant registrants. Both Napa and Ventura housed their GAIN and basic education staffs in the same office complex, and both counties scored higher than the others in staff reports of the frequency of interactions between GAIN staff and registrants.

IV. Operating the Penalty Process

As shown in Appendix Figure I.1, the process for imposing penalties on GAIN registrants who fail to attend their assigned activity on a regular basis follows a number of steps. The process begins with a determination of whether or not the registrant has "good cause" for not participating. This often involves sending the registrant a warning letter outlining the sanctions that may be applied if participation is not forthcoming. If no good cause is found, the next step

TABLE 8.2

GAIN STAFF ESTIMATES OF THE INTENSITY OF CONTACTS WITH REGISTRANTS,
BY COUNTY

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno		Total
								GAIN	EW ^a	
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:										
Staff are "very likely" to contact, by end of month, a registrant who is attending <u>basic education</u> but is not well-motivated or participating effectively	91%	75%	46%	76%	27%	32%	38%	21%	16%	42%
Staff are "very likely" to contact, by end of month, a registrant who is attending <u>vocational education or training</u> but is not well-motivated or participating effectively	83	69	48	36	14	29	35	33	13	37
Staff "very often" contact <u>registrants with no participation problems</u> just to maintain contact	75	31	63	17	7	16	24	14	0	23
Sample Size	13	19	24	26	15	36	40	30	37	240

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions H3, H7A, H7D.

^a"EW" stands for "eligibility workers."

is conciliation, a personal attempt by the case manager to encourage the truant registrant's participation. Money management follows conciliation. This is an intermediate penalty whereby the registrant's welfare checks over the next three months are sent to a substitute payee to make any necessary expenditures on behalf of these registrants. The final penalty is financial sanctioning. For AFDC-FG registrants, this means a reduction in their welfare grant for three or six months; for AFDC-U registrants, it means the termination of their welfare grant for three or six months. The duration of the sanction in both cases depends on whether the registrant is in noncompliance for the first or second time. Money management and financial sanctions can only be imposed on mandatory registrants. Volunteers who do not cooperate are penalized by excluding them from the program for a period of six months.

GAIN staff consistently engaged in a variety of responses to lax attendance -- from offering encouragement and problem solving to sending warning letters -- before invoking money management and sanctions, as prescribed in the GAIN legislation. In fact, in the field interviews the GAIN staff generally expressed sympathy for registrants' problems with child care, illness, family relationships, and other circumstances that caused them to miss program activities. Their sympathy may have been engendered in part by the frequent interactions case managers had with registrants and in part by their own general views on the causes of poverty and welfare dependency, which tended to give situational explanations prominence.

Nonetheless, the GAIN staff did not always interpret registrants' problems as sufficient excuse for poor attendance in GAIN activities. In response to a staff survey item asking how many registrants they believed were "overstating their barriers to participating in the GAIN program," only 24 percent of the staff said "very few." Most (63 percent) gave answers falling in the middle range of the scale, indicating that they believed a considerable number of registrants were overstating their obstacles to participation.

Although many staff preferred to emphasize informal persuasion over formal penalties in responding to participation problems, the informal approach was more practicable in some counties than in others, namely, in those with lower registrant-staff ratios (especially Napa, Butte, and San Mateo). A staff member in one of those counties reported, for example, that the formal penalty process would begin only after "we've exhausted all our resources." A case manager from another small-caseload county noted that she had many repeated contacts with registrants reluctant to begin a program activity, and that: "With resistant people, I just keep calling. Eventually, they run out of excuses." Staff in two of the small-caseload counties (Butte and San Mateo) were also much more likely than other GAIN staff to initiate home visits to persuade registrants to enter the program or to learn about the problems impeding participation. The extent of home visits where case managers had the time is perhaps the best illustration of how much the staff were willing to go out of their way to avoid using penalties.

Neither home visits nor other extraordinary informal efforts to induce compliance were common in counties where registrant-staff ratios were higher. In these counties the staff tended to respond in more routine ways to poor attendance, either by sending a letter to the registrant, followed, if the registrant did not reply, by a Problem Participation Notice (a "GAIN-22" form), or by sending a Problem Participation Notice in the first place. This notice instructs the

registrant to call or visit the case manager and warns that a failure to respond may affect the registrant's welfare benefits.

When mandatory registrants did not respond to efforts at conciliation, the staff then initiated money management and sanctioning procedures. Money management is intended to be an inconvenience for truant registrants, but its structure imposed differing degrees of inconvenience on both staff and registrants across the eight counties studied. In several of them, for example, registrants could select their own third-party payees and not infrequently chose friends or relatives. In others a staff person or unit within the welfare department served as the alternate payee for all registrants on money management. One county decided not to use third-party payees at all; the department simply sent the welfare check to the registrant a few days late.

Many staff reported that using money management, as well as the later step of reducing or terminating the welfare grant, was a confusing, time consuming, and frustrating process. Some also noted it was prone to manipulation by registrants who wished to avoid the participation requirement. Several staff described money management in particular as "more of a punishment for the staff than for registrants." As one case manager explained in a field interview:

It's a very long system. [Registrants] can respond a little for a little while, and then it's a judgment call as to where I take up the process again with them. What I haven't found is that money management makes any difference in the person complying or not. I believe in giving people a lot of chances and not having it be a punitive system. On the other hand, money management has not been an effective deterrent. When they name a brother or sister as payee, they are not losing anything. A lot prefer it. Also, it's three months where no one is bugging them.

Some staff complained that registrants on money management often did not begin to cooperate until financial sanctions were just about to take effect. The case manager just quoted continued:

[In one instance, a letter was sent to a registrant] saying that the case was to be discontinued because of a failure to cooperate. The client called the day before [the sanction went into effect] and said he would cooperate. What do you do? I pulled my hair. I had to think of something to convince me he was going to cooperate. It was a small moral dilemma.

A case manager from another county said:

Some of my clients ask to be put on money management. They say, "As long as it pays my bills, that's great." I don't think it's a deterrent.

The entire formal conciliation and penalty process usually took many months. In some cases, it took a year or more from the time the registrant stopped participating in GAIN until financial penalties were imposed. This helps to explain the small proportion of registrants who were assigned to money management or sanctioned during the study period. (See Chapter 4.) Little evidence was found that staff resisted invoking the penalty process because it was long and complicated.

Few respondents to the staff survey said that the process was being used "too much" (10 percent, as shown in Table 8.3) or "too little" (22 percent). Nonetheless, half of the respondents "strongly agreed" with the statement that the process offered too many "second chances." Furthermore, most staff did not believe that GAIN's penalties were highly effective tools for reducing noncompliance. Only 26 percent of the survey respondents described money management as "very effective," and only 30 percent gave this rating to financial sanctions.⁴ In field interviews a number of staff suggested that the penalties might be more effective if they were administered sooner.

Table 8.3 shows some striking cross-county differences in staff views of the penalty process. As an illustration, 55 percent of the respondents in Santa Clara described money management as "very effective," whereas none in Kern viewed it that way. (In fact, 87 percent of the Kern respondents described it as "very ineffective.") The overall pattern of variation probably reflects differences in staff philosophies across the counties, as well as differences in their views of how the penalty process was actually being administered.

The speed with which staff resorted to money management and financial sanctioning sometimes varied markedly among staff members within the same county. A supervisor in one county noted that "everyone does it differently -- it reflects their own personal attitudes about welfare clients." Administrators in that county were hoping to standardize the penalty process so that registrants would receive roughly the same treatment no matter which staff member handled their case. As noted in Chapter 3, another county attempted to standardize the process by assigning the penalty function to a single staff position.

V. Information Systems for Case Management and Program Management

The lack of extensive or sophisticated management information systems had important implications for both case management and overall program management in all eight counties. (See MDRC's first report on GAIN for a detailed discussion of the factors contributing to the slow evolution of these systems, including decisions made at the state and county levels.)⁵

⁴About 37 percent of respondents rated money management as "very ineffective," while 32 percent gave this rating to GAIN's financial sanctions.

⁵Wallace and Long (1987).

TABLE B.3

GAIN STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF CONCILIATION, MONEY MANAGEMENT,
AND SANCTIONING PROCESSES, BY COUNTY

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Fresno		Total
								GAIN	EW ^a	
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:										
The formal conciliation and sanctioning process is being used "too much"	17%	7%	5%	17%	29%	0%	8%	14%	9%	10%
The formal conciliation and sanctioning process allows "too many" second chances	43	40	38	75	87	29	30	68	64	51
Money management is a "very effective" tool for improving compliance	50	24	23	12	0	14	55	36	20	26
Available sanctions are a "very effective" tool for improving compliance	63	24	29	25	13	37	49	30	12	30
Sample Size	13	19	24	26	15	36	40	30	37	240

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions K2, K3, K4, K5.

^a "EW" stands for "eligibility workers."

Although the systems in place at the time the counties began operating GAIN varied considerably in their capacities, all were limited in important ways. In some counties information on registrants' background characteristics, assignments to activities, and program statuses (such as deferral or money management) was kept for each registrant individually and only in paper files. In other counties much of this information was maintained on computer files, and in some instances case managers could retrieve the information from terminals located in their office. But in general, even the automated systems gave program and case managers little capability to aggregate and sort the information by types of registrants, activities, or statuses. Moreover, during the period studied none of the counties had established computerized linkages with the income maintenance or fiscal units of the welfare department, both of which maintained important information relevant to GAIN. (This was less of an issue in Fresno, where eligibility workers handled many GAIN functions.)

Better automated tracking systems would improve the efficiency of case management in a number of ways. For example, better systems could automatically remind case managers when certain actions needed to be taken with particular registrants -- such as the expiration dates for deferred registrants who then need to be assigned to an activity. Without automated systems, the staff typically devised their own manual systems for this purpose, which were time consuming to maintain.

An automated system linked to the fiscal and income maintenance units of the welfare department would further enhance ongoing case management. For example, linkages to income maintenance would allow GAIN staff to learn more quickly when changes occurred that affected whether registrants should be active in a program component -- such as whether a registrant who stopped participating in an activity had left AFDC, or whether a registrant deferred for employment was still working. These and other changes in status partly determine what actions the case manager should be taking in monitoring toward particular registrants. A connection with the fiscal unit would offer such benefits as better monitoring of support payments to registrants; quicker rectification of problems with support payments, such as claims that bus passes or child care payments were not received; and greater capacity to monitor eligibility for support payments, based on participation in GAIN activities. Thus, better automation would help case management functions by freeing case managers from at least some clerical chores (thereby not only improving morale but also allowing more time for building relationships with service providers and paying more personal attention to registrants); reducing the number of clerical staff needed to operate the monitoring system; and helping case managers take appropriate actions toward registrants in a more timely and effective manner.

The limited automation available in the eight counties also made program management more difficult than it needed to be because managers usually could not efficiently produce the aggregate statistical reports both essential to program management and required by the State Department of Social Services (the agency charged with monitoring GAIN). These reports show, for the program as a whole, the number of registrants with particular background characteristics; the number assigned to particular program components, such as basic education or job search; and the number in specific statuses, such as deferral, money management, or sanctioning. This information allows administrators to assess program outcomes and determine

program policies and operations that need to be reviewed or improved.

Automated information systems could also be designed to produce similar reports for each case manager's caseload. This information would help administrators review the practices of individual case managers and help reveal inconsistencies in the decisions that case managers make for registrants, as in imposing penalties, granting deferrals, and selecting GAIN activities.

Using manual or partially automated systems to produce aggregate reports, as the study counties did, required considerable staff resources. Data had to be compiled from individual paper files or records for all registrants, and then keyed into a computer. An administrator in one of the larger study counties described the problems this entailed:

The manual system is killing us, let me tell you. I get questioned: Why so many clerical workers? Well, there are reams of paperwork to produce, and someone has to do it. And when the State or someone calls and says "Give us your numbers on how many clients you have referred to so and so," I had to stop the whole operation for a day just to find out how many cases we had. It adds extra work that we never built resources in to handle.

Many of these problems should be rectified as the counties begin to implement more automated information systems, as all are planning to do. As a result, they should be able to monitor GAIN registrants, case managers, and program performance more efficiently and effectively in the future.

VI. Summary

This chapter has discussed the nature of staff efforts taken to encourage registrants' continuous participation in GAIN activities. The main findings have shown these to be a burdensome set of tasks, more difficult, complex, and time consuming than many administrators and staff had predicted. In several of the eight counties the original plans for conducting ongoing case management had to be revised, in some cases several times. In particular, because of the erratic participation of many registrants, counties found it necessary to tighten their monitoring arrangements with the service providers to expedite reporting on attendance problems. County experiences indicate that, in general, closer monitoring can be achieved by putting more of the reporting burden on service providers or GAIN staff than on registrants themselves, and through co-location of education and training services with the GAIN office.

In addressing the sources of the attendance problems, the staff found they had to spend a great deal of time with registrants, many of whose situational or motivational problems required repeated staff interventions. The staff in counties where registrant-staff ratios were low had several advantages over their counterparts in the counties with large caseloads: in particular, more time to contact registrants promptly after learning of their participation problems and more opportunity to intervene in ways that might prevent major disruptions in participation.

The staff with small caseloads were also able to use informal efforts to a greater extent in order to achieve compliance before invoking the money management and sanctioning processes, which many staff found time consuming and frustrating to use. In contrast to these advantages, lower registrant-staff ratios meant that more staff resources were being invested in serving a given number of registrants. Consequently, this was a more costly approach to ongoing case management.

Another main finding was that the counties' minimally automated information systems made both ongoing case management and overall program management more burdensome than necessary.

Although it was not possible for this study to measure the effects of these various difficulties on the participation rates achieved in the counties during the study period, it is safe to say that each contributed in part, directly or indirectly, to the problems the counties had in encouraging registrants' ongoing participation in GAIN.

CHAPTER 9

BASIC EDUCATION

Basic education was the most frequently used component of GAIN. By mandating education as a key initial activity for registrants lacking basic skills, GAIN distinguishes itself from previous welfare employment programs and presents a new set of implementation challenges. Many registrants, some of whom had previously dropped out of the education system, are being required to participate continuously for potentially long periods of time in a service they may or may not want. Educational providers are being asked to accommodate a new group of students with different circumstances than most students they enroll. Welfare departments and schools must develop mechanisms for communication in order to enforce GAIN's ongoing participation requirement.

As discussed in Chapter 6, orientation attenders participated in basic education at higher rates than they did in other GAIN activities; however, these rates ranged from 6 percent in Butte to 28 percent in Santa Clara. This chapter provides a more detailed analysis of the registrants' participation in basic education and examines several factors that may influence participation rates in this component.

The main research questions of this chapter inquire into the nature of each of these factors: the availability of education services, the percentage of the GAIN caseload determined to be in need of basic education, the percentage of those in need who were referred, and the percentage of those in need of basic education who were deferred or never active. Also important in understanding this flow are completion patterns and the length of time registrants stayed in basic education.

The first section of the chapter discusses how basic education providers established and operated education services for GAIN registrants and explores adaptations they made in this process. This section is based on field research interviews and observation. The next section analyzes the referral and participation patterns of GAIN registrants determined to be in need of basic education, as well as the possible reasons for these outcomes, and the third section outlines completion policies and patterns. The data source for this analysis is the review of casefiles for the study sample. The last section examines the response of GAIN registrants to the basic education requirement, based on field interviews, primarily with staff and teachers.

I. Establishing Basic Education Programs for GAIN Registrants

As discussed in Chapter 1, the GAIN legislation specifies that registrants who lack basic literacy or math skills, a high school diploma or its equivalent, or English language skills must

participate in basic education services, either before, after, or concurrently with the job search component. Depending on their educational background and scores on a basic skills test, registrants are placed in adult basic education (ABE),¹ General Educational Development (GED), or high school equivalency) preparation, or English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.

The two state agencies that supervise welfare departments and educational providers -- the Department of Social Services (SDSS) and the Department of Education (SDE) -- set the general parameters for the structure of these basic education services and funded this GAIN component through a variety of sources.² Both agencies worked with the California Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), to develop a basic skills test to detect deficiencies in basic literacy and math skills.³ SDE also developed a set of guidelines for the provision of GAIN educational services. Consistent with the GAIN legislation, one major recommendation was that the instructional approach be competency-based, meaning that services should be provided on an individualized and self-paced basis and should allow students to start and end their course of study as their needs require.⁴ This approach provides the flexibility needed by GAIN because programs can, over the course of a year, accommodate a continuous inflow of students, starting at different educational levels and taking varying amounts of time to reach higher basic skills levels.

¹ABE programs provide instruction in the basic skills of reading, writing, language, and mathematics for individuals functioning below the high school level.

²To fund education services for GAIN registrants, adult schools and community colleges must first use up all their normal educational funding resources; that is, they must use "average daily attendance" funds (described below) until they are at their cap. In addition, a portion of the Title IIA 8 percent funds under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) have been given priority for GAIN registrants and can be applied to basic education services. If these sources of funding have been depleted, the provider is eligible to apply for unused ADA funds from SDE. Only when all of these resources have been depleted, or when a provider is not eligible for the funds, can GAIN funds can be applied to basic education services. Only two of the eight study counties, Ventura and Santa Clara, needed GAIN funds to operate their basic education programs.

Educational agencies in California are funded through a mechanism based on "average daily attendance" (ADA), which is an attendance-based formula. One unit of ADA represents 525 "student instructional contact" hours. Local educational agencies are reimbursed by the state for the number of ADA units they generate up to a maximum level, called the "cap."

If an educational agency does not generate the full level of its authorized ADA, the unused ADA funds either revert to the state treasury or are reappropriated by the legislature for a specific purpose. The GAIN budget contains reappropriated ADA funds earmarked for adult schools and regional occupational centers and programs serving GAIN registrants. Local educational agencies have access to these funds.

³SDSS entered into an inter-agency agreement with SDE, which contracted with the San Diego Community College District Foundation, Inc. to use the CASAS data bank to develop a GAIN basic skills test.

⁴This recommendation, as well as others, is discussed in the Handbook on GAIN Educational Services prepared by the California State Department of Education (1986, V.1-19).

While the state guidelines provide a general direction for the provision of basic education services, in fact, the county welfare departments and educational providers have considerable discretion in the actual operation of this component. At the county level, the implementation of the component requires the development of a new service relationship between welfare agencies and the educational systems. Prior to GAIN, although welfare recipients could enroll in basic education on their own, participation in an education program was not a necessary condition for remaining on welfare. Under GAIN, educational providers are required to serve a mandatory, and relatively disadvantaged, population on an ongoing basis until they finish the program requirements or leave welfare. The county GAIN programs have the discretion to select the educational institutions of their preference, as well as to leave the basic education curriculum and completion policies up to the education providers or to participate directly in these decisions.

The first issue educational providers faced was ensuring they could expand to accommodate the new supply of students. They also had to set up their policies and services to meet the general guidelines set by the state and any guidelines set by the county GAIN office. The teachers had to be able to work with what for many is a new population of students, some of whom were resistant to the program, and the schools had to adapt to GAIN's ongoing participation requirement, which, as shown in Chapter 8, sometimes required them to monitor closely the attendance and progress of GAIN registrants. Some providers encountered difficulties in meeting these demands and achieving the necessary level of integration with the welfare system. Each of these issues is explored in turn in the following subsections.

A. Expanding Capacity

Both GAIN staff and educational providers had anticipated the educational system would need to increase its capacity to accommodate the influx of GAIN registrants. The degree of expansion required was initially unknown, however, because the educational providers were uncertain about how many of their previous enrollees had been welfare recipients and how many would now be determined to need basic education. In fact, the number of GAIN registrants who would need basic education was significantly underestimated by SDSS at the outset of the program.⁵ Nevertheless, many of those GAIN registrants actually did not participate, thus mitigating the pressure placed on educational institutions during the period of early implementation studied. (Section II will discuss registrants' participation in basic education in depth.)

In most counties the educational system did manage to expand to meet the demand generated by GAIN. Most providers were able to set up competency-based educational services

⁵Initially, the State Department of Social Services estimated that 15 percent of GAIN registrants would need basic education. This was later revised to 40 percent. As discussed later in this chapter, about 60 percent of the registrants in the MDRC participant flow sample were determined to be in need of basic education.

for GAIN registrants, primarily by replicating the adult basic education programs that were already in place with newly hired teachers and newly rented classrooms.

Although there was not a general shortage of basic education services, there were some capacity problems in specific areas. In particular, it was sometimes difficult to find adequate classroom space to house the influx of students. For example, one provider was conducting basic education for GAIN registrants in what its staff considered to be marginal facilities: a school that had been designated as unsafe for children (but not for adults). Other schools rented trailers to use as classrooms. Other capacity problems included schools being closed during the summer, difficulties serving students in rural areas, and providers' problems in setting up workable open-entry and open-exit programs.

The providers also encountered some administrative problems in financing the expansion of their basic education services. Because of the complexity of the funding mechanisms, providers in several counties ran into delays in having their allocations approved by SDSS and SDE.⁶ Some providers took what they saw as a major risk and operated programs without having yet received approval for the necessary funding. Some of these providers later threatened to discontinue instruction for GAIN registrants unless the approval was granted.

All told, these difficulties did not result in an inability to provide educational services to registrants during the early implementation period. In the future, however, as existing registrants remain in basic education and new registrants enter this component, the educational system will be under increasing pressure to expand capacity. It is unknown at this time whether the institutions will be able to meet future demand.

B. Variations in Services Across Counties

The eight counties developed basic education services for GAIN registrants differently, based on the existing resources in the community and the involvement of educational providers to the GAIN program. The services instituted during the study period varied along the following dimensions:

- o Number of Providers. Kern and Napa relied predominantly on one school for basic education services, whereas Stanislaus relied on twenty-seven providers. The other counties relied primarily on two or three providers.
- o Provider Type. Adult schools were the most common providers of basic education. A few counties also depended on community colleges. Santa Clara was unique in its reliance primarily on community-based organizations for basic

⁶Several counties experienced difficulties in obtaining approval for unused ADA funds. The Title IIA 8 percent funds available under the JTPA were easier to secure.

education services.⁷

- o Structure. Six of the eight counties mainstreamed GAIN registrants into the existing adult basic education programs; Ventura and Kern instead set up ABE, GED, and ESL programs serving only GAIN registrants.⁸ Another difference in structure is in ABE and GED classes. Schools in most counties offered the two curricula in separate classes, but some schools in Napa, San Mateo, Butte, and Santa Clara combined the two into one class.
- o Hours of Instruction. The amount of instruction offered per week varied by provider. Most programs offered instruction 12 to 20 hours per week, meeting 3 to 4 hours daily and 4 to 5 days per week. Programs rarely required a commitment beyond 20 hours a week. A few programs provided instruction for only 3 to 4 hours per week. Most programs held classes during the day.

In most counties, the educational providers determined both the structures and the curricula of basic education services. The welfare department did not exert much control or influence over the content of the education, which made it easier for educational agencies to replicate their existing systems. Most providers had employed a competency-based curriculum before establishing programs for GAIN registrants and were able to use the same instructional methods for these new students. In general, the methods consisted primarily of a self-paced academic curriculum using textbooks and workbooks and some group lectures.⁹

Santa Clara was an exception to this pattern. The GAIN program selected community-based organizations, some of which had not previously provided basic education, as the primary service providers and paid them directly from GAIN funds. At the outset of the program each educational provider determined its own curriculum for GAIN registrants. In the second year of operation, however, basic education contracts were made performance-based: payments were tied to the registrants' attainment of competency levels defined by the welfare department.

⁷Among the sample of registrants examined in MDRC's review of GAIN casefiles (Fresno was excluded because of unavailable data), almost 57 percent of all AFDC-FG basic education participants and 70 percent of all AFDC-U participants attended adult school programs. Roughly one-quarter of all basic education participants were active in programs offered by community-based organizations, but almost all of these were in Santa Clara. These statistics were weighted to reflect the size of the caseloads in each county, and so the community-based organizations appear prominently in the array of providers because of the size of Santa Clara's caseload (the largest of the seven counties).

⁸Several basic education providers in Santa Clara originally planned to operate programs expressly for GAIN registrants; but because of the unexpectedly high rate of nonattendance at GAIN orientations, the providers accepted other students to compensate for the low number of GAIN students.

⁹Two schools added computer-assisted instruction with the advent of GAIN. Other curriculum adaptations will be discussed later in this chapter.

The purposes of this change were to standardize the curriculum, make it easier to compare the performance of different educational institutions, and provide a more timely cash flow to educational suppliers. Thus, the welfare department in Santa Clara was much more active in determining the content of basic education services than its counterparts in other counties.

In sum, all the counties were successful in establishing basic education services for GAIN registrants. Although the counties exhibited significant variations in how they provided the services, most put them in place by building on existing programs in the community.

C. Accommodating a New Clientele

Before GAIN most educational providers had little experience in providing basic education to the welfare population in a mandatory setting. The GAIN guidelines, and the GAIN population, resulted in four new sets of demands on the educational providers, especially on the teachers: accommodating the situational problems of their new clientele, overcoming the motivational problems experienced by some of the registrants required to attend basic education, dealing with registrants who made slow progress, and adjusting to registrants' employment focus.

Regarding the first new set of demands, basic education teachers reported to MDRC field researchers that the GAIN registrants attending their classes had more personal, health, child care, and transportation problems, and lower self-esteem than the other students they taught. According to the teachers, all of those problems tended to interfere with GAIN registrants' attendance and their ability to concentrate in class. In their efforts to help GAIN students overcome these problems, the teachers found themselves filling more of a counselor role than they had in the past. One teacher explained the difference she found in teaching GAIN students:

We get more involved with the students themselves. Because they have to be accountable for absences, and because absences are affected by personal problems, we have to deal with these issues, and therefore we have to talk to more students.

Some teachers reported being comfortable with this role, but others said it might not be an appropriate use of their time. In one county a conflict between teachers and GAIN case managers arose over precisely what a teacher's role should be in addressing registrants' personal problems. The teachers claimed that the case managers were not lending enough counseling support to GAIN registrants, while the case managers claimed the teachers were overstepping their proper role by becoming too involved in the personal lives of their students. One school hired a counselor to assist registrants with their personal as well as vocational problems, and others were attempting to secure funding for counseling help during the study period.

In the past, basic education services in the counties were geared toward students who came to school voluntarily. The mandatory participation requirement therefore posed a second set of classroom challenges: motivating those registrants who may not wish to be there. The basic education teachers reported that some GAIN registrants did not have the personal motivation

that their volunteer students brought to class and they had to make more of an effort to encourage students to learn. Some teachers seemed to enjoy this aspect of their job. One teacher noted:

The best part of the job is getting these clients excited and relaxed.... Many have big chips on their shoulders.... We do a lot of counseling about this.

When students did not attend class regularly, their progress was slower and instruction could take much longer than expected, according to the teachers. In general, however, the teachers reported few instances of misconduct in the classroom. Another teacher explained:

Basically, I don't find a lot of resistance in class; the problem I have is getting students to attend regularly.

A third problem reported by some educational providers concerns a small number of GAIN registrants who were not progressing at an acceptable rate, some of whom were learning disabled. Some teachers voiced frustration over having to work with registrants who did not seem capable of progressing, and many thought these registrants had been improperly placed. As one GAIN administrator explained:

These clients will not score 215 on the CASAS test, no matter what we do.... [They] take up a huge amount of time in relation to their proportion of the class.

Some schools established informal mechanisms to refer these registrants back to the welfare department for another placement. However, SDSS had advised the counties to keep working with these registrants, and many GAIN managers were reluctant to allow registrants to move to another component until they met established criteria. Other counties began planning to establish basic education classes expressly for those GAIN registrants with learning disabilities.

A final issue that posed new challenges for educational providers was the registrants' general focus on employment, rather than on academics, as would be the case with the more traditional basic education student. As will be discussed in a later section, some GAIN registrants preferred to be in activities more directly related to their employment goals than in basic education, and teachers therefore found it difficult at times to maintain registrants' interest in academic subjects.

Some providers adapted their initial basic education curricula and structures over the course of the study period to better meet the different needs of GAIN registrants. The most common adjustment was to revise the class outlines to include more life management and employment skills; in fact, some providers added supplemental materials with a vocational focus. One adult school administrator described the shift in emphasis as follows:

We try to do things that reinforce work behavior.... We want to

teach clients what the appropriate work behaviors are.

Other examples of adaptations included instituting a pre-GED program for those registrants too advanced for ABE but not yet ready for GED; a pre-literacy ESL program for those registrants who do not speak English and are not literate in their native language; and training sessions for teachers to help them understand GAIN and the needs of GAIN registrants.

Overall, as educational providers developed an understanding of GAIN registrants, they attempted to adapt their basic education classes to better meet the registrants' various needs and life situations.

D. Developing Procedures for Monitoring Participation

As explained in the previous chapter, GAIN's mandatory participation requirement necessitated the development of procedures to track the attendance and progress of GAIN participants in basic education. Schools had to maintain this information on GAIN students and regularly communicate it to the welfare department. Before establishing programs for GAIN registrants, the schools serving the adult population had reported aggregate attendance only for funding purposes. As the problems of monitoring the participation requirement became more apparent, the welfare departments asked educational providers to keep increasingly closer track of their students, beyond their standard practices. As Chapter 8 illustrated, some counties were able to develop strict procedures by which the schools reported attendance figures on a timely and frequent basis, whereas others were much less successful on this score.

Educational administrators reported in field interviews that the monitoring systems were often burdensome, depending on the requirements of the welfare department.¹⁰ Because the number of no-shows and number of registrants who attended sporadically were higher than expected, providers had to devote increasing amounts of administrative resources to even the less intensive monitoring procedures. As a result, some schools were reluctant to establish mechanisms to report information on a frequent basis.

Several schools gave the task of compiling attendance data to clerical staff, sometimes in conjunction with instructional aides.¹¹ This procedure took hold in counties that required daily or weekly attendance, such as Ventura, Kern, and Napa. While the procedures were time consuming, the GAIN staff indicated they were efficient and accurate.

At other schools the teachers were responsible for monitoring attendance. This procedure gave rise to a number of difficulties. First, the teachers were often paid on an hourly basis for

¹⁰Daily attendance reporting obviously imposes a greater burden than monthly reporting; reporting on registrants' progress as well as their attendance increases the onus on the provider.

¹¹In some counties the instructional aides collected attendance information from the classes and gave it to a clerk, who in turn made daily reports to the welfare department; in others the clerks both collected and reported the information.

their instruction time, and the providers did not have the extra funds to reimburse teachers for their additional work. Second, some teachers resisted taking on a monitoring role: in their words they wanted to be a teacher, not a cop policing GAIN students, which they believed would interfere with instruction. Third, when classes included both GAIN registrants and other students, teachers had to enforce different attendance standards and keep different records for each group. One teacher said, "You can't be a policeman for half the class." As a result of these problems, at least one county eventually switched from teachers to clerks as attendance monitors.

At another extreme, in addition to reporting attendance, one school in Ventura hired a full-time "resource teacher" to monitor the progress of GAIN students by comparing their attainment of competencies with the hours of instruction they received every six weeks. GAIN case managers were then made aware of difficulties their registrants were experiencing. As this example shows, monitoring registrants' progress entails an even greater use of resources by educational providers.

E. Integrating Basic Education into the GAIN Program

Since basic education is a key component of the GAIN program, it is important that the welfare department effectively communicate its expectations for the program to educational providers. Some teachers reported, however, that they were not well informed about the requirements and goals of the GAIN program. One teacher explained:

We were never given an orientation to the GAIN program and never introduced to any of the channels for communicating with GAIN case managers; I have had to deal with problems as they arise.

Some educators reported their belief that if they had been given a better idea of the vocational goals of the registrants, they could have assisted them more readily. Another teacher explained the difficulties she was having:

The teachers don't know what the next GAIN training component for the registrant will be or what job the person is heading for, so that the decision as to when the registrant is proficient enough to leave is an abstract one and difficult to make.... I think it would be helpful to have a more accurate idea of what GAIN is doing, to learn about their expectations for these students. If they have an expectation, it would be helpful for me to know in order to help them.

In some counties, the basic education providers developed a stronger identification with the GAIN program. This was particularly true in Kern and Ventura, where the educational providers, on their own initiative, created basic education classes expressly for GAIN registrants. In other words, the identity of the programs depended on the GAIN program, and the providers specifically looked for ways to serve the registrants more effectively. In these counties, the

providers initiated a series of adaptations to their programs, including curricula with more of a vocational focus, more counseling, and a greater emphasis on monitoring.¹² It is important to recognize, however, that Kern and Ventura each relied on only a few educational providers, making it easier than it was in the counties with more complex arrangements for the welfare department to communicate the goals and needs of the GAIN program to providers.

In contrast, in some schools institutional performance was not judged by the progress made with GAIN registrants and there was less incentive to adapt to the GAIN program. In counties where GAIN registrants were mainstreamed with other students, the teachers may not have known which of their students were in GAIN or what their different circumstances were; in those cases the rate of change to accommodate the GAIN students was slower. Nonetheless, creating GAIN-only classes is not a necessary condition for making adaptations, since some mainstreamed programs did make strides in adjusting to the demands of the GAIN program.¹³ Moreover, several of the educational providers reported that mainstreaming may help avoid the stigma GAIN students may feel in attending separate classes.

II. Referral and Participation Patterns in Basic Education

This section presents referral and participation rates for those registrants determined to be in need of basic education and examines the reasons for not participating. The next section examines completion policies and presents data on the duration of participants' enrollments in basic education and their completion rates.

This section and the next draw from MDRC's casefile reviews (see Chapter 2) in all the counties studied, except for Fresno,¹⁴ for a sample of 336 AFDC-FG and 337 AFDC-U mandatory registrants determined to be in need of basic education.¹⁵

Figure 9.1 traces 100 typical registrants through the GAIN program over the four months

¹²Some of the teachers in Kern and Ventura received training in the role the welfare department expected them to play, and both counties succeeded in establishing procedures for closely monitoring attendance and performance. One school hired a teacher solely to monitor the performance of GAIN students.

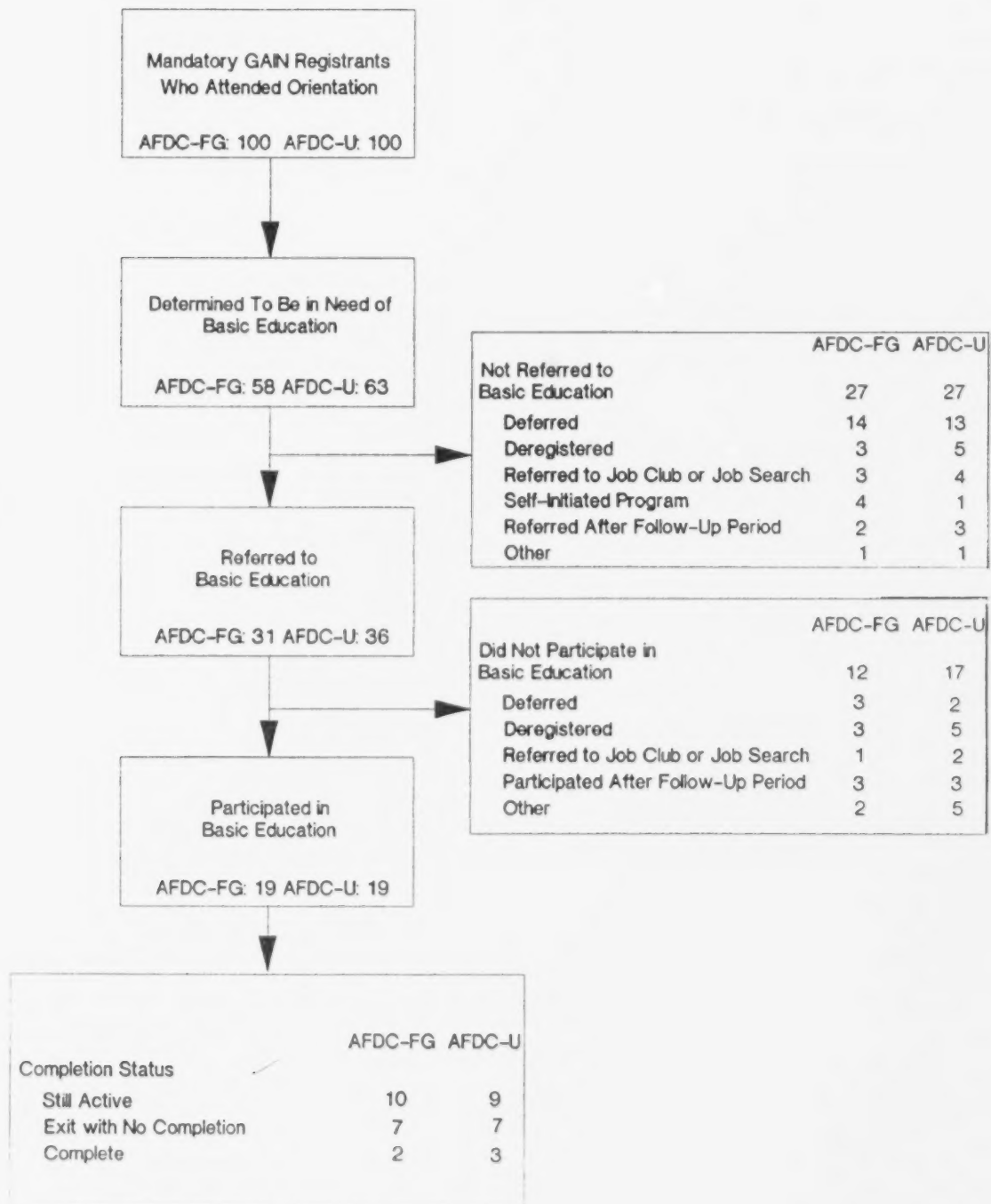
¹³Napa in particular made many of the adaptations for the GAIN program discussed in note 11. The adult school in Napa is co-located at the GAIN office which helped to facilitate the implementation of these adaptations.

¹⁴The casefile reviews from Fresno are not included in these analyses because its data on orientation attendance were unavailable. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion of the types of data collected in each county.

¹⁵This basic education subsample comprises mandatory registrants who had no high school diploma or GED certificate, scored lower than 215 on the reading or math portion of the basic skills test, had a limited ability to speak English, or were referred to basic education for no readily apparent reason. The subsample does not include voluntary registrants.

FIGURE 9.1

BASIC EDUCATION REGISTRANT FLOW WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION
FOR 100 TYPICAL AFDC-FG AND 100 TYPICAL AFDC-U ORIENTATION ATTENDERS



following their attendance at an orientation. The following discussion highlights key measures that help explain county variation in participation rates in basic education: the percentage of registrants determined to need basic education, and the percentages of those in need of education who were referred to the component, deferred, or never active in GAIN after their orientation. The discussion focuses on the participation patterns of AFDC-FG mandatory registrants; it mentions AFDC-U registrants only when their participation rates substantially differed from those reported for AFDC-FG registrants.

A. Referral Patterns

As briefly noted earlier, the GAIN legislation mandates that registrants be referred to basic education, either as the initial component or after job search activities, if they fall into one of three groups:

- o Those who lack literacy or math skills, as determined by a basic skills test, whether or not they possess a high school diploma or its equivalent. Most registrants are required to take the basic skills test, unless they cannot speak English.¹⁶ A score of below 215 on either the reading or math portion indicates that the registrant requires ABE. (If a registrant scores 215 or above on both portions and also has a high school diploma or its equivalent, basic education is not required.)
- o Those who lack a high school diploma or its equivalent yet score 215 or above on the basic skills test -- both the reading and math portions. Such individuals are referred to a GED program.
- o Registrants with limited ability to speak English, as determined by a listening test or at the discretion of GAIN staff. These registrants are referred to ESL.

Appendix Figure J.1 illustrates these criteria for referral to basic education.

As explained in Chapter 2, and shown in Figure 9.1, approximately 60 percent of those registrants who attended a GAIN orientation were found in need of basic education according to the criteria established by GAIN. Chapter 2 also showed that the percentage in need of basic education varied widely by county, reflecting the differing characteristics of their welfare populations and their differing plans for phasing in GAIN (see Appendix Tables J.3 and J.4). This variation was more pronounced for the AFDC-FG than the AFDC-U registrants; among the former the proportion found needing basic education ranged from 27 percent in Butte, reflecting its phase-in of a more educated population, to 70 percent in Ventura, in part reflecting its relatively large number of registrants who needed ESL instruction.

¹⁶In some counties, self-initiated registrants did not have to take the basic skills test.

Figure 9.2¹⁷ shows that two-thirds of the registrants determined to need basic education did not have a high school diploma or GED certificate.¹⁸ About one-half of the registrants needing this service scored below 215 on the reading or math segment of the basic skills test usually in addition to lacking a diploma or certificate. A substantial number, about one-fifth of the AFDC-FG registrants and about one-third of the AFDC-U registrants, were targeted for basic education because of their limited ability to speak English. A small proportion of both samples, about 10 percent, had a high school diploma but were targeted for basic education because of their test scores. Thus, although it did serve as a placement tool, the basic skills test was identifying only a small proportion of registrants as needing basic education who would not have been identified simply by their lack of a high school diploma or GED certificate. In addition, only about one-quarter of all registrants who "failed" the basic skills test failed both the math and the reading segments; approximately three-quarters failed only the math segment.¹⁹

Although many GAIN registrants were determined to be in need of basic education, the proportion actually referred, or assigned, to basic education was much smaller. Table 9.1 shows the referral and participation rates for these registrants. Appendix Tables J.1 and J.2 present the results by county. As shown in the first "total" row of Table 9.1 just over one-half of the AFDC-FG registrants determined to need basic education were referred to the activity within the four month follow-up period. The referral rates varied considerably by county, however, ranging from around 40 percent in Butte and Ventura to around 70 percent in Napa and Stanislaus. Reasons for not being referred to basic education are discussed below.

B. Participation Patterns

Whereas roughly one-half of all GAIN registrants in need of basic education were referred to a program, even fewer -- only one-third of all those determined in need -- attended a course

¹⁷Registrants included in the reason unknown category are those with missing data on high school diploma receipt or English-speaking ability and/or those referred to basic education for no readily apparent reason.

¹⁸This includes only registrants without a high school diploma who did not have a limited ability to speak English. Those registrants who are lacking a high school diploma and have a limited ability to speak English are included in the limited English category.

¹⁹Among AFDC-FG orientation attenders who scored below 215 on either segment of the CASAS test, 76 percent failed only the math segment, 1 percent failed only the reading segment, and 23 percent failed both. Among AFDC-U orientation attenders in this situation, 68 percent failed only the math segment, 9 percent failed only the reading segment, and 24 percent failed both. This pattern was more pronounced for those registrants with a high school diploma who scored below 215 on either segment. Among AFDC-FG registrants in this situation, 88 percent failed only the math segment, while 12 percent failed both the reading and math segments; none failed the reading segment only. Among AFDC-FG registrants without a high school diploma and a score below 215 on either segment of the CASAS test, 70 percent failed only the math segment, 29 percent failed both the reading and math segments, and 1 percent failed the reading segment only. Rates for the AFDC-U registrants were similar.

FIGURE 9.2

ORIENTATION ATTENDERS WHO WERE DETERMINED TO NEED BASIC EDUCATION,
BY ASSISTANCE CATEGORY AND REASON

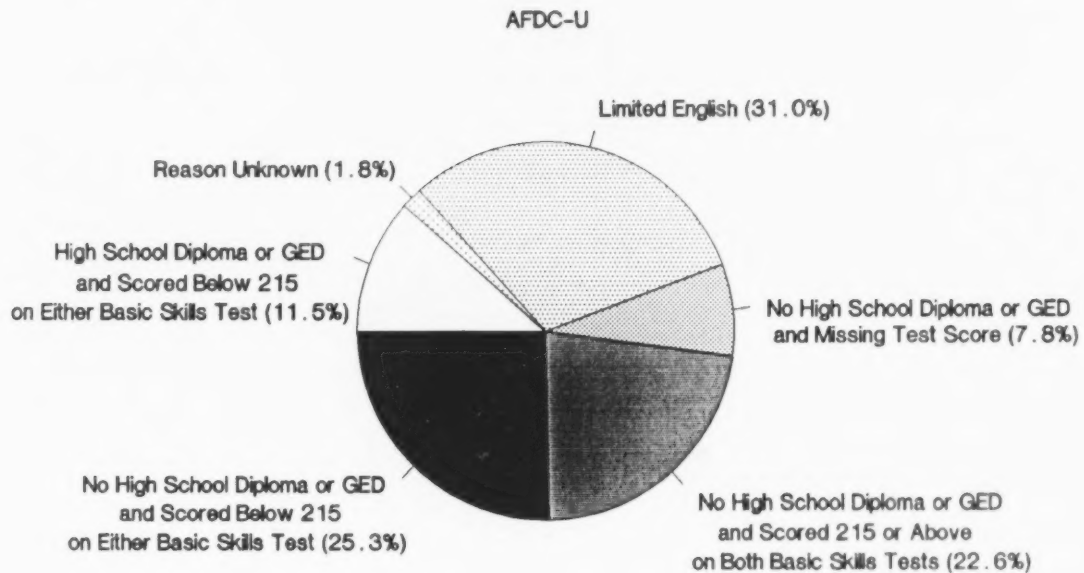
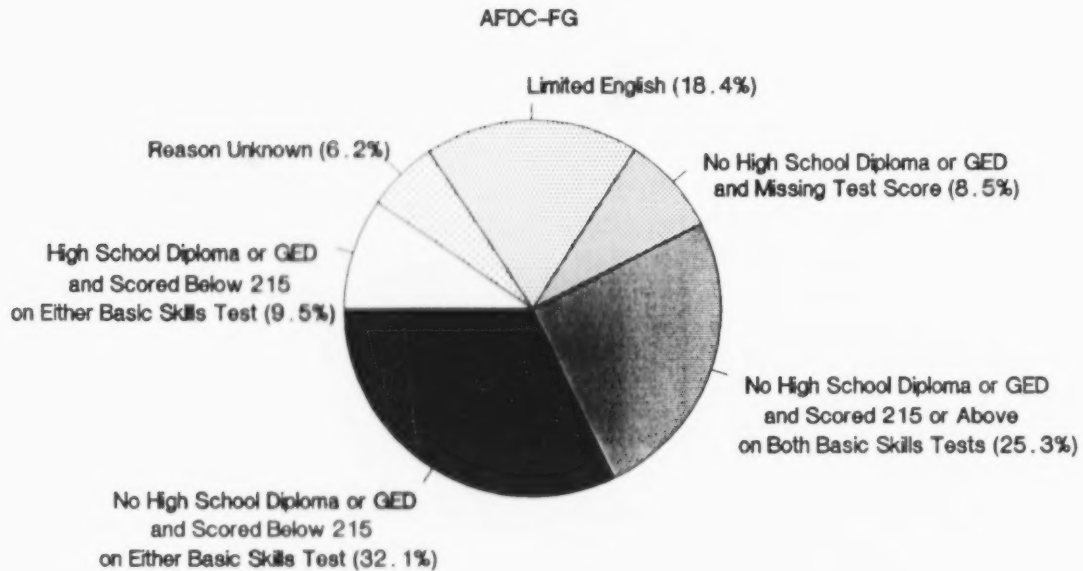


TABLE 9.1

REFERRAL AND PARTICIPATION RATES IN BASIC EDUCATION

A. PERCENT OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS DETERMINED
TO BE IN NEED OF BASIC EDUCATION, WHO WERE REFERRED TO
AND PARTICIPATED IN BASIC EDUCATION WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION

Basic Education Component	Mandatory Registrants	
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U
Adult Basic Education		
Referred	26.2%	24.5%
Participated	13.5	13.1
GED Preparation		
Referred	19.6	16.6
Participated	11.7	6.3
English as a Second Language		
Referred	9.2	16.4
Participated	8.1	10.7
Total		
Referred	53.8	56.6
Participated	33.0	30.1
Number of Orientation Attenders Determined To Be In Need of Basic Education	336	337

B. PERCENT OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS REFERRED TO
BASIC EDUCATION WHO PARTICIPATED WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION

Basic Education Component	Mandatory Registrants	
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U
Adult Basic Education	51.5%	53.5%
GED Preparation	59.7	38.0
English as a Second Language	88.0	65.2
Total	61.3	53.2
Number of Orientation Attenders Referred to Basic Education	185	188

(continued)

TABLE 9.1 (continued)

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these deferral and participation rates because of unavailable data.

Those determined to be in need of basic education were those individuals who had no high school diploma or GED, scored less than 215 on the reading or math basic skills test, had limited English ability, or were referred for no reason. This table only includes program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

"Referred" means that the registrant was assigned to a basic education program as a GAIN component.

"Participated" means that the registrant participated in the activity at least one day.

Distributions may add to more than 100.0 percent because sample members can be referred to or participate in more than one activity.

at least one day, as shown in panel A of Table 9.1. Again there was substantial variation across counties, with the participation rate for AFDC-FG registrants ranging from 20 percent in Stanislaus to 52 percent in Napa (Appendix Table J.1). In general, counties with higher referral rates to basic education components had higher participation rates in the activity. Both AFDC-FG and AFDC-U registrants needing basic education most often participated in ABE. The AFDC-FG group was more likely, however, to participate in GED preparation, and less likely to participate in ESL, than the AFDC-U group.

Panel B of Table 9.1 examines participation rates using a different base: those referred to basic education within the four-month follow-up period, rather than all those determined to be in need of basic education. Among all AFDC-FG registrants referred, 61 percent participated at least one day, whereas among all AFDC-U registrants referred, 55 percent participated at least that long. Other distinctions arise when the rates are calculated in this manner. Among the three basic education activities, ESL showed the highest rates: 88 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants and 65 percent of the AFDC-U registrants referred to this activity participated. And as shown in the second panels of Appendix Tables J.1 and J.2, the rates once again varied by county. Stanislaus was at one extreme, with only 28 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants who had been referred ever participating; and San Mateo at the other, with over 82 percent of AFDC-FG registrants participating. Overall, AFDC-FG registrants had higher participation rates than AFDC-U registrants.²⁰

Appendix Tables J.3 and J.4 present statistics, by county, on the first component in which AFDC-FG and AFDC-U registrants determined to need basic education participated. The AFDC-FG registrants were more likely than the AFDC-U registrants to participate in basic education as their first GAIN component, whereas in several counties the AFDC-U registrants were more apt to participate in job search activities first. For AFDC-U registrants, there is an

²⁰Separate analyses examined rates of participation in basic education by subgroups of registrants who had been referred to basic education. Among the AFDC-FG registrants referred, participation rates were higher among the older than the younger ones (ages 19 to 24, 48 percent; 25 to 34, 51 percent; 35 to 44, 73 percent; 45 or older, 68 percent). AFDC recipients (65 percent) were more likely to participate than AFDC applicants (55 percent). Hispanics (71 percent), Indochinese (100 percent), and other Asians (83 percent) had much higher participation rates than Caucasians (48 percent) or blacks (29 percent). Those receiving AFDC for more than two years (56 percent) had a lower participation rate than those receiving AFDC for less than two years (69 percent) or those who had never received AFDC (64 percent). Among the AFDC-U registrants referred to basic education, participation rates were also higher for older registrants than younger registrants (ages 19 to 24, 34 percent; 25 to 34, 43 percent; 35 to 44, 58 percent; 45 or older, 70 percent). AFDC recipients (54 percent) and applicants (53 percent) were equally as likely to participate. Differences among ethnic groups were less pronounced than they were in the AFDC-FG sample: Hispanics, 54 percent; Asians, 57 percent; Indochinese, 67 percent; Caucasians, 45 percent; blacks, 66 percent. In contrast to the AFDC-FG sample, AFDC-U recipients for more than two years (62 percent) had a higher participation rate than those receiving payments for less than two years (52 percent) or those who had never received AFDC (47 percent).

increase between the percentage of those who participate in basic education as a first activity and the percentage who ever participate within four months, while these rates remain similar for the AFDC-FG registrants. AFDC-U registrants' relatively high participation rates in job search activities as a first component indicates that these registrants commonly completed this activity before attending basic education. As discussed below, GAIN staff reported that many AFDC-U registrants were, in fact, reluctant to attend basic education activities.

Both referral and participation rates in basic education did not increase notably with a longer follow-up period, although participation rates increased by a greater margin than referral rates. For a portion of the sample examined over an eight-month follow-up period, the rates were a few percentage points higher than the four-month rates, with the bulk of the gains realized between four and six months.²¹

C. Reasons for Not Participating

Obviously, many registrants who were determined to be in need of basic education did not receive that education, either because they were not referred or because they did not participate. This section discusses the reasons for each of those possibilities. Table 9.2 summarizes the reasons recorded for not being referred to basic education for those determined in need of it; Table 9.3 summarizes the reasons recorded for not participating in basic education for those referred to this component.

According to the caseload reviews, once registrants were determined to need basic education, deferrals from GAIN activities represented the primary reason why many were not referred to this activity. About one-half of the registrants were not referred for this reason. Those in need of basic education were most commonly deferred because they were employed more than 15 hours a week or because of illness, the most common reasons for deferral among the full sample.²² Approximately one-quarter of the registrants determined to need basic education were

²¹Eight months of post-orientation follow-up data are available for approximately 38 percent of the sampled registrants who were determined to need basic education. This subsample (including both AFDC-FG and AFDC-U registrants) consisted of 32 in Napa, 41 in San Mateo, 1 in Butte, 76 in Ventura, 33 in Kern, 66 in Stanislaus, and 7 in Santa Clara. Among the AFDC-FG registrants in the subsample, referral rates were 54 percent at four months, 56 percent at six months, and 58 percent at eight months. The participation rates for these same follow-up periods were 31 percent, 37 percent, and 40 percent, respectively. Among the AFDC-U registrants in the subsample, referral rates were 63 percent at four months, 65 percent at six months, and 69 percent at eight months. The participation rates for these same follow-up periods were 23 percent, 30 percent, and 32 percent, respectively.

²²Among the AFDC-FG registrants who were not referred to basic education, 28 percent were deferred because of illness; 27 percent, because of employment more than 15 hours a week; 15 percent, because of a severe family crisis; and 30 percent, for other reasons. Among the AFDC-U registrants, 21 percent were deferred because of illness; 29 percent, because of employment for (continued...)

TABLE 9.2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS FOR NOT
BEING REFERRED TO BASIC EDUCATION WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION
FOR ORIENTATION ATTENDERS
DETERMINED TO BE IN NEED OF BASIC EDUCATION,
WHO WERE NOT REFERRED

Reason	Mandatory Registrants	
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U
Deregistered	12.3%	17.0%
Deferred	50.2	47.4
Referred to Job Club/Job Search	11.1	16.5
Active in Self-Initiated Program	13.1	5.5
Referred After Follow-Up Period ^a	8.9	10.7
Other	4.3	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0
Number of Orientation Attenders Who Were Not Referred to Basic Education	151	149

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these calculations because of unavailable data.

Those determined to be in need of basic education were those individuals who had no high school diploma or GED, scored less than 215 on the reading or math basic skills tests, had limited English ability, or were referred for no reason.

Basic education includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED Preparation (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). This table only includes program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

"Not Referred" means that the registrant was not assigned to a basic education program as a GAIN component.

^a Available data indicated that referral took place after the four month follow-up period.

^b "Other" reasons include no provider available and reason unknown.

TABLE 9.3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS FOR
NOT PARTICIPATING IN BASIC EDUCATION WITHIN FOUR MONTHS
OF ORIENTATION FOR ORIENTATION ATTENDERS
REFERRED TO BASIC EDUCATION, WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE

Reason	Mandatory Registrants	
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U
Deregistered	33.1%	39.6%
Deferred	29.0	22.0
Referred to Job Club/Job Search	9.8	17.9
Active in Self-Initiated Program	1.9	4.1
Personal Problems	10.6	3.4
Other ^a	16.9	13.2
Total	100.0	100.0
Number of Orientation Attendees Who Did Not Participate In Basic Education	59	68

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these calculations because of unavailable data.

Basic education includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED Preparation (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). This table only includes program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

"Referred" means that the registrant was assigned to a basic education program as a GAIN component and only includes the registrant's first referral to a basic education component.

"Did Not Participate" means that the registrant did not participate in the activity at least one day.

^a"Other" reasons include child care problems, transportation problems, and no provider available.

not referred to the component during the follow-up period because they were participating in other GAIN activities. The AFDC-U registrants participating in another activity were most likely to be found in job search activities, whereas the AFDC-FG registrants were as likely to be participating in self-initiated activities as in job search activities.

Once registrants were referred to basic education, the most common reason for not participating was deregistration from GAIN. Approximately one-third of the referred AFDC-FG registrants, and two-fifths of the referred AFDC-U registrants, who failed to participate were in this category. In addition, about one-quarter of the referred nonparticipants were deferred from GAIN activities, again primarily because of employment for more than 15 hours a week or a verified illness.²³

D. Factors Explaining County Variation in Participation Rates

Variation in county participation rates can be explained by a number of factors. Appendix Tables J.3 and J.4 provide some insight into the major sources of variation. As would be expected, counties with a higher percentage of registrants determined to need basic education had a higher proportion of registrants entering this component. However, other factors influenced the use of this component among registrants determined to be in need of it.

County differences in deferral rates appears to have been one factor. Registrants in some counties were more likely to be deferred from participation than in other counties, and thus were less likely to be referred to basic education during the follow-up period. For example, almost half of all AFDC-FG registrants determined to need basic education in Ventura and Stanislaus -- which had lower basic education participation rates than most other counties -- were deferred as their first "activity" in GAIN. Butte, which also had comparatively low participation rates, did not use deferrals more than other counties, but it had a policy having much the same effect: it routinely placed registrants "on hold" after orientation until a case manager became available, as explained in Chapter 3. As Appendix Table J.3 shows, 32 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants in need of basic education in Butte had no GAIN activity or status assignment.²⁴

The experience of Stanislaus suggests that staff monitoring procedures (See Chapter 8) also

²²(...continued)

more than 15 hours a week; 12 percent, because of a severe family crisis; and 38 percent, for other reasons.

²³Among the AFDC-FG registrants who were referred to basic education but failed to participate, 28 percent were deferred because of medically-verified illness; 27 percent, because of employment for more than 15 hours a week; 16 percent, for a severe family crisis; and 29 percent, for other reasons. Among the AFDC-U registrants, 19 percent were deferred because of illness, 32 percent because of employment for more than 15 hours a week; 14 percent, because of a severe family crisis; and 35 percent, for other reasons.

²⁴In Butte, registrants "on hold" were officially designated as being in appraisal.

affected participation rates.²⁵ Although 70 percent of AFDC-FG registrants needing basic education in this county were referred to that component at some point during the follow-up period, only 20 percent were known by staff to have ever participated in it. Moreover, 21 percent had no status or activity assignment.

III. Completing the Basic Education Component

A. Policies on Completion

Although the state guidelines for entering basic education are relatively specific, those for determining when a registrant has completed basic education are not. A self-paced GED program ends when the registrant passes the GED examination, but no similar guideline exists for ABE and ESL courses. The GAIN regulations state that service providers can use their existing post-testing instruments and competency standards to judge a participant's successful completion. Furthermore, the scoring systems of these tests are to be compatible with the initial screening test, since the same level of competency defining the need for basic education is to serve as the standard for completion. These policies were not, however, interpreted consistently at the local level. Thus, the criteria for judging progress and completion in ABE and ESL varied not only from county to county but also from school to school within counties.²⁶

Most schools established standard completion criteria for GAIN registrants, such as achieving a certain score on a specified test; others, however, allowed individual teachers to exercise their own discretion. In interviews some school administrators expressed their frustration with having no defined criteria. As one administrator explained: "Providers are clamoring for guidance on the exit criteria for remedial education." GAIN staff also reported that they were unclear what the completion of basic education components meant, as a GAIN case manager explained:

Every once in a while I get a call from a teacher saying so and so is finished. I have no idea what it means. It's like a turkey and it's done. It just seems to be the teacher's judgment.

Welfare departments also purveyed different requirements for the extent of basic education that registrants must pursue before continuing in the GAIN sequence. These differences

²⁵The GAIN program in Stanislaus contracted the tracking of registrants in basic education to another agency that relied heavily on registrant self-reporting, a strategy that staff said did not work well.

²⁶In the time since the study period for this report ended, SDSS and CASAS jointly addressed the problem of standardizing ABE completion criteria, by developing an exit test for ABE students who have completed their course work. Kings, Merced, Napa, San Diego, and San Mateo counties began a pilot run of the instrument in July 1988 to assess its fiscal and program effects. If all goes well, statewide implementation of the ABE exit test will occur sometime in 1989.

concerned whether registrants who completed an ABE or ESL program were expected to continue on to prepare for a GED certificate or instead participate in job search services and then go on to assessment if they did not find employment. In some counties it was necessary only to "finish" ABE or ESL, while in others registrants had to remain in basic education until they achieved high school equivalency. Moreover, GAIN staff in some counties developed informal mechanisms allowing a registrant to leave basic education for another activity before completing the component, if the staff believed very little progress was being made.

B. Completion Patterns

This section examines completion patterns during the four-month follow-up period for registrants who participated in a basic education program. Basic education participants were counted as having "completed" the activity when, according to their county or provider standards, they had reached the appropriate skill level. Participants were counted as having "exited" basic education when they left without completing the component for reasons such as employment or a transfer to a new component. Table 9.4 summarizes the results on the completion patterns and duration of basic education. It should be noted that small sample sizes for some basic education components do not permit an intercounty analysis.

Approximately one-half of basic education participants were still active in basic education four months after orientation. ESL participants were most likely to still be active at the end of the follow-up period, whereas GED students were least likely. With a follow-up period of six months, the percentages of registrants still active in basic education activities decreased somewhat.²⁷

Those enrolled in GED were the most likely to complete their program within the four-month follow-up period. AFDC-U participants in GED were more likely to complete the activity (44 percent) than AFDC-FG participants (15 percent). The rate of receiving a GED certificate was slightly lower than the GED program completion rate; however, the rate of receipt is probably an underestimate because an individual's receipt of the certificate was counted only if the registrant reported it and the case manager recorded it.²⁸ Completion rates

²⁷Six months of post-orientation follow-up data are available for roughly 85 percent of the sampled registrants who were determined to be in need of basic education. This subsample (including both AFDC-FGs and AFDC-Us) consisted of 45 registrants from Napa, 52 from San Mateo, 46 from Butte, 136 from Ventura, 96 from Kern, 159 from Stanislaus, and 36 from Santa Clara. When the length of the follow-up is changed from four months to six months, the proportion of AFDC-FG registrants still active in ABE decreased from 49 percent to 41 percent; the decrease for GED was from 43 percent to 37 percent; and that for ESL, from 64 percent to 30 percent. These rates were similar for the AFDC-U registrants, except that the percentage active in ESL remained constant instead of decreasing.

²⁸The rate of receiving a GED certificate among GED students during the four-month follow-up period was 12 percent for AFDC-FG registrants and 38 percent for AFDC-U registrants. For
(continued...)

TABLE 9.4

COMPLETION STATUS AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS OF PARTICIPATION
FOR BASIC EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION

Basic Education Component	Mandatory Registrants			
	AFDC-FG		AFDC-U	
	Percent	Average Number of Days	Percent	Average Number of Days
Adult Basic Education				
Exit ^a	38.1%	32	46.8%	31
Complete ^b	5.7	54	4.9	35
Still Active ^c	55.3	81	46.7	87
Status Unknown ^d	0.9	--	1.6	--
Total	100.0	61	100.0	57
GED Preparation				
Exit ^a	33.1	32	16.1	46
Complete ^b	14.8	36	44.2	50
Still Active ^c	47.0	66	33.7	75
Status Unknown ^d	5.1	--	6.1	--
Total	100.0	48	100.0	55
English as a Second Language				
Exit ^a	27.9	18	31.4	43
Complete ^b	4.7	58	15.6	54
Still Active ^c	67.3	86	53.0	100
Status Unknown ^d	0.0	--	0.0	--
Total	100.0	66	100.0	75
Total ^a				
Exit ^a	34.4	30	34.7	36
Complete ^b	8.0	42	17.3	49
Still Active ^c	55.3	79	46.0	90
Status Unknown ^d	2.3	--	2.0	--
Total	100.0	58	100.0	63
Sample Size ^e				
Adult Basic Education	44		44	
GED Preparation	44		23	
English as a Second Language	15		29	
Total	102		95	

(continued)

TABLE 9.4 (continued)

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these participation rates because of unavailable data.

Participation rates include registrants who participated in the activity at least one day and only includes registrants' "first occurrence" of participation.

Basic education includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED Preparation (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). This only includes program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

^a "Exit" means the participant left without completing the component because of employment, a transfer to a new component, a "good cause", reason, or other reasons.

^b "Complete" means the participant reached the appropriate skill level, according to county or provider standards.

^c "Still Active" means that the registrant participated at least one day and did not have an interruption or end date for that activity within the follow-up period.

^d Average number of days of participation is not reported when completion status is unknown.

^e Sample sizes from ABE, GED and ESL do not sum to total sample size because one AFDC-FG registrant and one AFDC-U registrant participated in two basic education components during the follow-up period. Thus, the "total" panel reflects the completion status for the second basic education component and the total number of days of participation in both basic education components for these registrants.

for the other two basic education activities were lower than those for GED: approximately 5 percent of the AFDC-FG participants completed an ABE or ESL program within a four-month period.²⁹ With a follow-up of six months, completion rates for the AFDC-FG students increased significantly, particularly in ABE and ESL, whereas they remained almost the same for the AFDC-U students.³⁰

The average length of time students stayed in their course was shorter for GED than for the other two basic education activities.³¹ The length of stay averaged around 50 days in GED and ranged from 57 to 75 days in ABE and ESL. Because many registrants were still active at the end of the follow-up period, these duration estimates are truncated: the actual amount of time students spent in these programs was much longer.

A substantial portion of basic education participants exited without completing the program requirements. Within the four-month follow-up period, roughly one-third of the AFDC-FG students exited, with the ABE students being most likely to leave their program. The duration data indicate that those registrants who left basic education within the follow-up period did so relatively quickly, usually within a month.

²⁸(...continued)

the subsample of registrants followed for eight months and described in note 19 above, GED receipt rates increased slightly with a longer follow-up period. Among AFDC-FG participants the GED receipt rate increased from 21 percent at four months to 33 percent at eight months. For AFDC-U participants the GED receipt rate did not increase from four to eight months.

²⁹Over the four-month follow-up period very few registrants participated in a subsequent GAIN component after pursuing a basic education activity. Among the AFDC-FG participants in basic education, 4 percent of those who took ESL went on to ABE, while the remainder did not participate in another activity; none of the ABE students participated in another activity; and of the GED students, 6 percent went on to job club or job search, 2 percent went on to assessment, and the remainder did not participate in another activity. Among the AFDC-U participants, none of the ESL students participated in another activity; 1 percent of the ABE students went on to GED, 2 percent went on to assessment, 1 percent participated in another type of education or training program, and the remainder did not participate in another activity; and of the GED students, 12 percent went on to job club or job search, 7 percent went on to assessment, and the remainder did not participate in another GAIN activity.

³⁰For the subsample of registrants followed for six months and described in note 27 above, completion rates in ABE for the AFDC-FG participants increased from 9 percent at four months to 25 percent at six months; in GED, from 15 percent at four months to 21 percent at six months; and in ESL, from 5 percent at four months to 20 percent at six months. For AFDC-U participants, the change between the two time periods was an increase from 6 percent to 9 percent in ABE, and from 41 percent to 43 percent in GED; and a decrease from 24 percent to 22 percent in ESL.

³¹Statistics measuring the duration of participation were calculated by summing the number of days that elapsed between the start date of an activity and its end or interruption date. Thus, weekends and other days when registrants were not required to participate (such as if no classes were held on Fridays) are included in these estimates.

The casefile reviews included data collection on the reasons recorded for why registrants left basic education without completing the program requirements: employment, reasons GAIN staff considered legitimate or of "good cause," reasons staff considered illegitimate or of "no good cause," and other miscellaneous reasons.³² AFDC-FG and AFDC-U registrants differed in their reasons for exiting basic education. Almost half of the AFDC-FG students, but only about one-quarter of the AFDC-U students who left basic education, were excused from the activity for reasons, other than employment, considered to be of "good cause." AFDC-U students were more apt to leave basic education because of employment. According to the casefiles (which show only employment the staff were informed of and therefore understate actual employment levels), 38 percent of the AFDC-U students, but only 9 percent of AFDC-FG students, left their schooling for employment reasons. A smaller percentage of both the AFDC-FG and AFDC-U students, around 10 percent, stopped attending basic education with "no good cause," in the opinion of GAIN staff.³³

IV. Registrant Experiences in Basic Education

The data presented above show that the county GAIN programs experienced some difficulties in imposing the mandatory education requirement on GAIN registrants, at least during the four-month early-implementation period studied. A different question, however, is how well basic education programs were received by registrants who did attend. This section draws on the opinions of teachers and GAIN staff expressed in interviews and responses of staff to specific questions on the Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey. MDRC researchers interviewed only a few registrants themselves, and so the conclusions drawn here are only tentative. In general, both GAIN and teaching staffs indicated, as noted earlier, that some registrants accepted the basic education requirement, while others were resistant to participating. Attendance problems, as might be expected, were reported to be more prevalent among this latter group.

Both teachers and GAIN staff reported that when registrants agreed to fulfill the basic education requirement, many attended regularly and found the experience worthwhile. MDRC staff interviewed a small number of GAIN registrants who were attending basic education classes and found that they did view their course in a positive light. A GAIN registrant who had been in an ABE course for four months explained:

³²These reasons are those the GAIN staff recorded on registrants' program activity form. "Good cause" reasons often represented either a preliminary step to deregistration or deferral or a legitimate problem with the service provider, transportation, or child care.

³³Those exiting for "no good cause" represented 8 percent of AFDC-U students and 14 percent of the AFDC-FG students. In addition, 2 percent of the AFDC-FG and 7 percent of the AFDC-U students transferred to another GAIN component, 23 percent of the AFDC-FG and 7 percent of the AFDC-U students left for other reasons, and 11 percent of the AFDC-FG and 7 percent of the AFDC-U students were missing data on this item.

I know it's helping me. And I see a lot of people here I saw on the streets before. Now they're trying to do something for themselves. They don't resent being here.... It's surprising to me that I see the same faces here every day, people that I didn't think would stay here, that I've known for quite a while, trying to make something of themselves.

Teachers also judged that most GAIN registrants who attended regularly were motivated. As one teacher put it: "These guys want to be here." Educators in several counties reported that GAIN registrants often were initially leery about participating, but eventually they became involved in the program. One teacher reported, for example, "We often see students who initially don't want to be here but do get turned on after a couple weeks here."

At the same time, education and welfare agency staff also reported that some registrants who seldom showed up or attended sporadically exhibited resistance to mandatory basic education. A teacher explained:

Some students wouldn't attend regularly if it's not a requirement. For some, it's a battle to get them motivated. Most, however, do benefit. Usually those who don't benefit or want to attend just don't attend or if they do attend, do minimal amounts of work.

GAIN staff often interpreted this resistance to basic education as stemming from a history of educational failure. Evoking enthusiasm and commitment from registrants who had previously failed in the education system can be difficult, they said. A welfare department administrator recounted, "We're killing ourselves with the people who failed in the educational system.... It [basic education] makes people break out in a cold sweat." A teacher commented, "They have no idea what to expect. Some are angry, others are frightened. Some have horror stories about being in school."

GAIN and educational provider staff reported that men, particularly those who had held jobs and had not been in the classroom for years, were among those having trouble accepting the requirement. County staff also reported better attendance in ESL classes than in ABE or GED classes.

As the previous section illustrated, about one-third of GAIN registrants who participated in basic education left before completing the requirements. GAIN staff partially attributed the drop-out rate to the difficulty many of these registrants had with the course work; they became discouraged. One case manager pointed out that some registrants preferred employment over basic education, a view she did not share:

I have clients who are dropping out and taking really low-level McDonald's-type jobs. They just don't want to be in remediation [basic education] anymore. I try everywhere possible to discourage

clients from going on to work at \$4.25 an hour because they will be coming back on AFDC or will still be on it, but it takes a lot of talking.

Other registrants were willing to accept the consequences of not participating, as another case manager explained:

I have groups of people in the sanctioning process now that started out at the beginning of the program and lost heart. They were attending school regularly but as time went on, they attended less frequently and finally they are into the sanctioning process. I've really bent over backwards, I've sent notes, had them in. It's really the difference between the glitz and glitter of the beginning and now when people realize it's a long haul, there are ups and downs, it means going to work when you don't feel like going to work. School means going to work when your kids are sick and it would be easier to stay at home.

These comments also suggest that the level of effort required of GAIN staff to enforce ongoing participation in basic education can be substantial.

In spite of the difficulties they encountered with some registrants, the GAIN staff gave high marks to the basic education component, as shown in Table 9.5. A large percentage of GAIN staff believed that basic education was "very worthwhile" for registrants. In all the counties but Kern, however, a greater percentage of staff judged the GED program in this way than judged the ABE or ESL programs. Only 16 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that a sizable portion of GAIN registrants had been in GED preparation too long and would benefit from moving to a new activity; but 39 percent said this statement was true of ABE programs and 32 percent said it was true of ESL -- the two programs with less standard completion criteria and longer durations. A widely shared view among GAIN staff was that registrants would be better motivated if basic education curricula and activities were more strongly linked to vocational objectives and activities. Were they, registrants would have more tangible and well-defined reasons for attending. A comment from one teacher illustrates this view:

Many students can handle both [education and training] and are anxious for this. It makes their learning quicker. They can see the relevance better. Especially for those who hate school. It shows them there's light at the end of the tunnel.

Similarly, a case manager explained why she thought it important to combine the two activities:

I feel part of the problem is they feel they aren't going to do it. We've put them in education for some undetermined amount of time working for a goal we're not even sure of. Someone is going to

TABLE 9.5

GAIN STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF BASIC EDUCATION
FOR GAIN REGISTRANTS, BY COUNTY

Survey Item	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Unweighted Total
Basic Education Component is "Very Worthwhile" ^a									
Adult Basic Education	85%	63%	64%	73%	75%	61%	70%	62%	66%
GED Preparation	85	95	75	81	65	84	82	75	79
English as a Second Language	83	89	50	64	67	67	72	70	69
Sizable Portion of GAIN Registrants That Have Been in a Basic Education Component Too Long and Would Benefit From Moving to a New Activity ^b									
Adult Basic Education	25	89	52	54	50	13	22	33	39
GED Preparation	17	12	8	30	24	11	15	13	16
English as a Second Language	0	35	56	52	31	30	15	25	32
Number of Staff Surveyed	13	21	28	30	17	41	45	80	275

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN staff and supervisors from each county and a random subsample of eligibility workers and supervisors in Fresno.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions 14a, 14b, 14c, M1b, M2b and M3b.

^a Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

^b Percentages report staff who answered "yes."

come down with a wand and tap them on the shoulder and say "you're functional" and you can go on to the next rung. People don't know what they're working towards except some job readiness. That's why training is important; the point is to link up those two things.

Cognizant of these staff concerns, many GAIN staff and administrators expressed a strong interest in operating concurrent basic education and vocational training programs. One county - Napa -- conducted these two activities concurrently from the start of the program, and staff there reported satisfaction with this approach. A pilot program of concurrent training and basic education (for registrants who had previously completed job club or supervised job search) will be conducted in several counties. As an alternative, some schools hired counselors to provide career guidance. According to a teacher, "GAIN people don't like the sequence of services. From our points of view this career guidance helps students keep their career goals focused."

V. Summary

Implementing a mandatory program for a segment of the welfare population presents new challenges for educational providers. During the period studied, providers had fulfilled the necessary first step -- supplying basic education services for GAIN registrants by primarily replicating existing programs in the community. A number of schools also recognized the need to adapt their programs to the welfare population and to the requirements of GAIN; however, these accommodations were made in varying degrees. Further adaptations in the areas of adding a vocational focus to programs and in establishing effective attendance reporting procedures are important. To accomplish this, the welfare department must effectively communicate the needs of the GAIN program to providers.

About 60 percent of the GAIN registrants who attended orientation were determined to be in need of basic education. But only one-third of these registrants in need actually participated in basic education within four months of their orientation. The remaining two-thirds either were not referred to basic education (usually because they were deferred instead) or did not participate because, in most cases, they were deregistered or deferred from GAIN before attending school. Overall, for registrants in need of basic education, those counties with high referral rates to basic education and low deferral and "never active" rates elicited higher participation in basic education than the other counties.

Participation in basic education was characterized by low completion rates and long stays during the four-month follow-up period available for this report. Completion rates in GED were substantially higher than in the other basic education components, particularly for AFDC-U registrants. A majority of the registrants who attended basic education programs were still active in basic education programs as of the end of the follow-up period. The extent to which these patterns were caused by the undefined completion criteria for basic education programs or by the low skill levels of the participants is unknown. A substantial portion of registrants left basic education programs without completing the requirements during this time frame. These

factors influenced the flow of registrants to later training and work experience components. Longer follow-up is necessary to determine whether and how these completion and exit rates will change over time.

Overall, although GAIN registrants were not systematically interviewed, GAIN and provider staff reported that some registrants responded well to basic education. The staff also stated, however, that some registrants who had previously dropped out of the education system did not see a connection between basic education and employment and sometimes resisted being assigned to the component and attending regularly. Although the size of this group cannot be estimated, its existence presents difficulties for counties in enforcing the ongoing participation requirement.

CHAPTER 10

JOB SEARCH, ASSESSMENT, AND OTHER PROGRAM SERVICES

This chapter examines the services, aside from basic education, offered by GAIN: job search, assessment, pre-employment preparation (PREP), and training. The main research questions of this chapter concern the nature of these services and the service delivery networks they involve, the issues that arose in implementing and operating the components, and the use of such services by GAIN staff to achieve program objectives. These factors help to explain the participation patterns described in previous chapters.

The first section of the chapter examines job search, the operation of which reflected different county interpretations of GAIN's messages around quick job entry and further education and training. The next section discusses the formal assessment component, which usually occurs at a later stage in the model, and considers issues that arose in individualizing services at this stage of the program. The final section briefly addresses the operation of PREP and other post-assessment training services.

I. Job Search Services

As discussed in Chapter 1, the GAIN legislation mandates that the county programs offer two upfront services to assist registrants in finding employment: job club or supervised job search.¹ It also requires that registrants participate in either a job search activity or basic education as their first step in the GAIN program, with a few exceptions.² In the eight counties studied in this report, job search services were provided by either the GAIN staff or the Employment Development Department (EDD), who had experience conducting similar kinds of services under the Work Incentive Program (WIN). Specifically, in Napa, Butte,³ Ventura,

¹Ninety-day job search is also a component in the GAIN program. This activity occurs at a later stage in the program and, therefore was not used extensively during the research period. For this reason, 90-day job search is not discussed in this report.

²Job club or job search is the mandatory first step unless the registrant stopped receiving AFDC because of employment at least twice in the past three years or required basic education. If basic education is needed, the registrant may participate in the job search activity before or after basic education. The GAIN legislation specifies that registrants who have not been employed in the past two years are required to attend job club; those registrants who have been employed during that time may choose between job club and job search.

³In Butte, staff from EDD assisted staff from the welfare department during the first week of job club.

Stanislaus, and Fresno counties the GAIN staff conducted the activities, whereas in San Mateo, Kern, and Santa Clara counties EDD was the service provider.⁴

A. The Structure and Emphasis of Job Search Services

As designed by the GAIN legislation, one function of upfront job search services is to screen the more from the less job ready and to promote fairly quick job placements for employable individuals. At the same time, the Net Loss of Income provision allows GAIN registrants to refuse jobs found through upfront job search that pay less than their current income while on AFDC.⁵ Because of the high grant levels in California, this generally requires that jobs pay substantially more than minimum wage. The eight study counties implemented the upfront job search component using fairly similar structures and curricula, but emphasized different messages to registrants concerning the purposes and goals of the activity.

Both job club and supervised job search usually lasted for three weeks, although some counties extended the duration by one or two weeks.⁶ Job club usually consisted of a week of group instruction and workshops on job search skills, such as completing job applications, writing resumes, practicing interviewing skills, and building on motivation and self-esteem. Participants spent the remaining weeks at telephone banks or meeting with potential employers. Supervised job search, on the other hand, consisted primarily of registrants' making use of a telephone bank to call potential employers and arrange for job interviews, with the first day of the activity designated for staff presentations on skills and motivational issues, similar to those covered in job club. All in all, job club placed a much greater emphasis than supervised job search on developing job skills and improving self-esteem.

GAIN staff reported to MDRC field researchers that they believed job club was more valuable for registrants than supervised job search because it had a greater focus on developing job-seeking skills, building self-esteem, and providing a motivational boost. Consequently, staff in a number of counties said they were urging most participants to attend job club, regardless of their employment background. Indeed, as Chapters 4 and 6 illustrated, in most counties more

⁴Among the AFDC-FG job search participants in the seven counties (the data on Fresno were not available), 54 percent received their instruction from EDD, 46 percent attended programs operated by the local welfare office, and 3 percent received services from JTPA agencies. (This percentage reflects registrants in Napa, where the JTPA agency operated the GAIN program.) This split was greater for AFDC-U registrants who were active in job search. Almost 70 percent participated in EDD-operated programs, 30 percent attended programs run by the local welfare office, and 3 percent received services from JTPA agencies. Distributions do not sum to 100 percent because some registrants participated in more than one job search activity.

⁵See Chapter 1, note 6, for further information on the Net Loss Income provision.

⁶In most counties, job club met daily for three to four hours over the three-week period. Registrants in job search were not required to attend for a specified amount of time; instead they usually had to make a predetermined number of contacts (telephone or in-person) with potential employers and had to meet regularly with a job search staff leader over the course of each week.

registrants participated in job club than in supervised job search.

Although the counties implemented quite similar structures and curricula for job search services, they differed in how strongly they encouraged registrants to enter the labor market quickly and at what wage rates, as the next two sections show.

1. The Use of Job Search Service as an Informational Experience. A common view among GAIN staff was that the program should prepare registrants for jobs that paid well enough for them to leave and remain off welfare. Thus, for many registrants, staff tended to support more education and training over immediate employment. For example, as discussed in Chapter 3 (see Table 3.7), one-half of the GAIN staff reported that raising skill levels was a much more important goal in their agency than the goal of quick job entry, and two-thirds strongly believed the former should be the most important goal.

This perspective is reflected in how job search was conducted in four of the five counties where GAIN staff operated this component, and it contrasts with the approach emphasized in other counties by EDD.⁷ GAIN staff in those four counties more strongly encouraged registrants to be selective about the types of jobs they accepted, appearing to give higher priority to the Net Loss of Income provision. Although they were expected to look for employment, they were typically urged to resist taking low-paying jobs and to consider staying in GAIN to pursue further education and training. As one GAIN staff member explained:

We don't push people into minimum wage jobs, unless there is a career ladder. It would be a terrible disaster.... We want what is best for the client and some people do need skill training.

In a few counties, the staff calculated whether the registrant would be better off financially before recommending that he or she accept a particular job offer.

Rather than stressing immediate employment for all registrants, GAIN staff often regarded upfront job search services as an "informational experience" providing job-seeking skills and guidance that would be valuable after further education or training. A typical message is illustrated by the explanation one case manager said she offered registrants about job search activities:

I tell them to treat job club as an educational experience; that there are techniques for finding a job that they will have to know in the future anyway, so there is no harm in learning them now. However, they should make sure to look for the kind of job they eventually want; by doing so they can learn the entrance requirements and kind

⁷The five counties where GAIN staff operated job search activities were Napa, Butte, Ventura, Stanislaus, and Fresno. As noted below, Fresno was the exception and emphasized the immediate job-entry viewpoint.

of training they need. I emphasize to them that they do not have to take any job that they don't really want.

Another explained:

This is information you can apply all through your life. If you don't get a job, we will talk about training.

In another county, the staff used job club as a way to help registrants develop realistic employment goals. According to a GAIN staff member there:

In job club, they learn a lot about the range of opportunities available. It is not only a test against the labor market, it is learning what the client wants to do.

Staff particularly emphasized job search as an informational experience for registrants believed to have low vocational skill levels who did not need basic education or had completed it. (As noted in Chapter 7, GAIN staff sometimes urged registrants in need of basic education to complete that component prior to entering job search activities.)

2. Job Search Services as a Means to Quick Job Entry. In the three counties where the EDD operated the job search component of GAIN, the primary objective of the activity was to encourage immediate employment.⁸ Here, job search functioned more consistently as a screening device to test the demand for the registrants' job skills in the labor market -- that is, their ability to secure a job without further investment in education and training. The wage rate at employment was of lower priority.

The emphasis on immediate job entry in these counties can be traced partly to the managerial practices of local EDD offices, which regularly measured staff performance by tabulating and reviewing the number of job placements made. In explaining one agency's policy, an EDD administrator noted that "any job" was a positive step "even if it is near the minimum wage level." An EDD administrator in another county concurred, noting that once a registrant made it to the first step of the occupational ladder, the traditional way to pursue further training, if needed, was to do so at night. Overall, EDD personnel placed less importance than GAIN staff over the wage rate or career ladder of the jobs being offered to job search participants. At the same time, many EDD staff reportedly were not knowledgeable about the other services available to GAIN participants after completing the job search component, and this may have reinforced their focus on the benefits of immediate employment.

The different perceptions of the purpose of GAIN's job search components created some tensions between the two agencies. Some GAIN staff reported to MDRC field researchers that

⁸The three counties operating job search through EDD were San Mateo, Kern, and Santa Clara.

they did not always support EDD's job search policy. For example, one GAIN case manager commented:

EDD got real rough on her [a GAIN registrant] and told her to take the job. She called me because the job was not what she wanted and I told her she did not have to accept the job. She could go on with the program.... She would be better off in the long run with some training.... She could do a lot more with herself. This issue comes up a lot.

Some EDD staff, on the other hand, reported their frustration in working with registrants who have been told either that they do not have to take a job if it does not make them better off financially or that they should not take a job because after three weeks they will go into assessment and then into training. These staff would like to see registrants enter job search activities with an open mind about taking a job.

It is notable that EDD's approach to job search was also shared by some GAIN staff, particularly in Fresno, one of the five counties in which GAIN staff had responsibility for this component. For example, as one case manager in this county explained his advice to registrants:

I tell them if you go to school, two years from now you will be in the same position, having to go out and find a job, and you could be working your own way up in those two years.

B. The Completion of Job Search Activities

The participation data analyzed in this report indicate that among AFDC-FG and AFDC-U registrants who participated in job search activities, about two-thirds ended their participation (either by completing the activity or dropping out) without finding a job.⁹ Almost one-quarter of the participants, however, ended their activity because they had found a job.¹⁰ Since small

⁹Job club or job search participants were considered to complete the component if they stayed in the activity for the required number of days.

¹⁰Among the job club participants, 23 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants, 24 percent of the AFDC-U registrants, and 21 percent of the volunteers ended their participation to accept employment. 67 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants, 54 percent of the AFDC-U registrants, and 76 percent of the volunteers completed the component without becoming employed. The remaining registrants were still active in the activity at the end of the follow-up period or their completion status was unknown. Among the job search participants, 34 percent of the AFDC-FG registrants, 23 percent of the AFDC-U registrants, and 26 percent of the volunteers ended their participation to accept employment. Sixty-two percent of the AFDC-FG registrants, 64 percent of the AFDC-U registrants, and 68 percent of the volunteers completed the component without becoming employed. Again, the remaining registrants were still active in the activity at the end of the follow-up period or their completion status was unknown.

sample sizes did not allow an inter-county analysis, it cannot be determined if the different views of job search affected the placement rates for this component.

II. Assessment Services

The GAIN legislation requires that any registrant who has not obtained a job after completing the job search component (and basic education has been completed, if required) must participate in the next component in GAIN: assessment. The overall purpose of the assessment is to develop a longer term education or training agenda for GAIN registrants that is tailored to their individual capabilities, needs, and preferences.

The GAIN assessment component was a process, not a single activity. This process involved both staff from the GAIN office and from outside agencies, and had two basic steps: (1) an assessment of the registrant's work and educational history, employment goals, and educational and training needs; and (2) the formulation of an Employment Development Plan (EDP), which detailed the further services the registrant would receive to attain a specified employment goal.¹¹

The assessment component represents the stage in GAIN where registrants have the most opportunity to choose services themselves, since the initial services offered in GAIN are limited, for the most part, to job search and basic education, with assignments governed largely by predetermined criteria. Nonetheless, registrants' choice at the assignment stage is constrained by several factors. First, the EDP must recommend services that "fit" the registrant's capabilities. Second, the occupation the registrant chooses to pursue must be in a field that is in demand in the labor market. Moreover, the legislation specifies that post-assessment education (though not training) must be completed within two years. Finally, the EDP must recommend services that are currently available in the locality.

After describing how the assessment process works, this section examines the issues GAIN programs encountered in operating this component. It is important to note that this section is based on the early experiences counties had operating this component. As shown in Chapter 4, assessments were not extensively conducted during the period studied, mainly because of the large numbers of registrants who either did not attend an orientation or who were deferred or deregistered. In addition, many registrants assigned to basic education were slow to complete this activity.

A. Strategies for the Assessment of Employment Goals and Capabilities

The first step in the assessment process is to identify the participant's employment goals and

¹¹If a registrant disagrees with the assessment or the EDP, the GAIN regulations specify that another one be conducted by an independent third party. GAIN staff reported there was little use of this process.

capabilities through a series of tests and interviews. The GAIN legislation requires that the assessments be conducted by "a person qualified to provide counseling, guidance, assessment, or career planning."¹² All eight counties elected to have the assessment performed by agencies other than the county welfare department, in most cases community colleges or the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) agency. Four of the eight counties relied on more than one agency, usually two or three, although Fresno contracted with nine agencies. In Napa, the JTPA agency operated the overall GAIN program, and its GAIN case managers conducted the assessments.

There was little standardization among or within counties in the actual procedures for conducting this component. Many of the assessment providers applied to this task their previous experience conducting assessments -- in some cases with other populations such as students, disabled persons, or JTPA participants. The assessment procedures varied among the different localities along the following dimensions:

- o Duration. Assessments took from six to twelve hours. Although they usually extended over two to four days, some took two to four weeks.
- o Testing Instruments. The testing instruments varied based on the preference of the provider. They usually included tests of vocational interests, personality, and academic ability. The COPS (Career Occupational Preference Survey) and CAPS (Career Ability Preference Survey) tests were those used most often.
- o Individual Attention. Some assessors conducted a series of individual meetings with the registrant and would spend up to four hours in one-on-one interviews; others met individually for as little as a half hour.
- o Services Offered. Assessors differed in the focus of their services. Some focused on testing participants to determine their capabilities. In this case, most of the time was spent completing the required tests, although the assessor would meet once or twice with the participant in an individual or group setting to obtain personal information. Other providers, in addition to testing, saw their roles as teaching and informing participants about various occupations and training programs. In these cases, the participant might have had to research a particular occupational field or visit employers or training programs and meet with the assessor several times to discuss

¹²The GAIN regulations specify that the minimum qualification for assessors is either graduation from an accredited college or two years of counseling experience. The college study must include 15 semester units in counseling preparation, of which at least three units must be in career planning, guidance principles and techniques, personality development, occupational and industrial information, tests and measurements, or other courses relating to counseling preparation. The counseling experience must include vocational counseling in a variety of occupational fields for at least one of the two years and fifteen college semester units, as specified above.

those assignments. Still other assessors had a counseling focus and conducted workshops or interviews that addressed specific participation barriers such as low self-esteem.

- o Recommendations. The outcome of the needs and goals assessment was a written report, summarizing the test scores and interview results and indicating possible occupations for the participant. Some assessors recommended a specific type of training or a particular school; others left it to the welfare department to define the plan of action that would lead to the recommended occupation. (Appendix Table K.1 provides an example of an assessment report.)

B. Strategies for the Employment Development Plan

Once the outside assessment was completed, the next step was to formulate an Employment Development Plan (EDP), the agreement between registrant and GAIN office specifying the services the registrant would receive to attain his or her employment goals. The GAIN staff in the welfare department usually conducted this stage of the assessment process and played an active role in placing the registrants in the chosen activities. The role varied among counties, however, with the GAIN staff sometimes being much less active.¹³

The welfare department in Fresno played a very limited role in the assessment process. Assessment agencies conducted all of the testing and meetings with registrants leading to the development of the EDP, and the local Private Industry Council (PIC) made the actual placements. GAIN staff in the Fresno welfare department reviewed the EDPs and had the authority to revise them, but they rarely did. Thus, in this county decisions about registrants' long-term training were primarily being made outside the welfare department.

In contrast, GAIN staff in Napa and Stanislaus took an active part in the entire assessment process. In Napa, instead of contracting the assessment services to an outside agency, GAIN case managers at the JTPA agency conducted them in-house. These case managers reported viewing the EDP as the culmination of a "learning process" that registrants and case managers undertook together, beginning early on during the appraisal interview. At that time, case managers explored the participant's vocational goals and barriers to becoming employed. In job club, the registrant took the relevant tests and investigated occupational possibilities. The formal assessment took place on the last day of job club, when the registrant and the case manager met to agree on an EDP.

¹³The staff survey asked who was more responsible for developing an employment plan for registrants, and a majority of the staff in San Mateo, Butte, Ventura, and Stanislaus responded "both agencies equally." In Napa and Santa Clara a majority of the staff reported that their agency was "solely responsible." Only in Fresno did a majority of the staff report that another agency was "solely responsible" for the EDP. For the actual wording of the survey question, see Appendix C, question J1.

In Stanislaus, although an outside agency conducted the assessment of registrants' employment goals and capabilities, a GAIN staff member conducted a series of meetings with the registrant before formulating the EDP. As part of that series, the case manager gave the registrant "homework assignments": the registrant would evaluate his or her attitudes toward particular kinds of jobs and training programs. In other words, the assessment by the outside agency was just a starting point for more intensive discussions between case manager and registrant.

The other five counties adopted strategies for developing EDPs that fell in between Fresno's model of a limited role for GAIN staff and the more involved approach in Napa and Stanislaus. In these counties, after the outside agency had completed the assessment step, the case manager met with the registrant one or two times to formulate the EDP and make the placement in a training or job program. Here the assessor's report played a larger role in the process, and the GAIN staff were more concerned with working out the particulars of the assessor's recommendations. But as explained below, the GAIN staff, in conjunction with the registrant, often had the final say over the precise contents of the employment plan.

These different models were reflected in staff opinions on the process of formulating the EDP. The staff survey asked how much time the GAIN staff spent with the registrant to develop an EDP after the outside assessments had been completed. Respondents' estimates ranged from about one hour in Fresno to almost four hours in Stanislaus, with the average being about two hours.¹⁴ A majority of the staff in Napa, Stanislaus, and Butte judged that the GAIN staff were spending "enough time" on the EDP, whereas in San Mateo, Fresno, Kern, and Ventura less than 25 percent gave that judgment.¹⁵

C. Individualizing GAIN Services in the Assessment Process

As explained at the outset of this section, the assessment component is intended to result in an EDP that meets registrants' particular capabilities and career preferences. The actual operation of the assessment process, however, has given rise to a number of issues concerning the individualization of GAIN services.

The first issue concerns the role of registrant preferences in the assessment process. Both assessor and GAIN staff reported in interviews that accommodating registrants' career preferences is a goal of the assessment process. In particular, individual preferences were cited as crucial to motivating registrants to stick with and successfully complete their plans. For example, one case manager explained, "We want the client to want to do it." An assessor recounted, "Clients are solely responsible; I'm a resource of information. I tell them, if that's

¹⁴For the actual wording of the survey question, see Appendix C, question J2.

¹⁵The percentage represents staff who answered "6" or "7" on a 7-point scale. The phrase in quotation marks indicates the endpoint of the scale. For the actual wording of the survey question, see Appendix C, question J3.

what you want to do, then let's go. They make all the choices."

The staff survey also demonstrated this commitment to registrant choice. Table 10.1 shows that 49 percent of the staff responding said that registrants' "preferences and goals" were either the first or the second "most important" factor in determining their post-assessment training placement. These were exceeded in importance only by registrants' "prior work experience, educational background, and capabilities," which 68 percent of the staff surveyed said were the first or second most important factor. Registrants' attitude and motivation, their performance in previous GAIN components, the availability of training slots and support services, and program or support service costs all received much lower ratings.

In practice, however, specifying registrants' career preferences raised two issues of concern to GAIN staff, the first of which remained largely unresolved by the end of the study period.

The first issue was whether assessors were giving registrants the opportunity to make informed choices. Some GAIN staff reported that assessors were merely endorsing the preferences the registrant walked in with, instead of using the assessment to help educate the registrant about the range of career possibilities that might fit the registrants' capabilities, experiences, and preferences. In the words of GAIN staff in some counties, assessors were "rubber-stamping" registrants' preferences, by not giving them a choice among options they might not have thought of based on their own understanding of the labor market. As one case manager commented:

I feel ideally that the assessments should really give me some insight, but I haven't learned anything new from them. In one case, I had a client who was bright, [had] a lot of talent, a lot of potential, but she had not worked in a really long time. Assessment could have been enlightening for her and for me, but it wasn't. The client had in mind doing child care, because that was something she knew. And the assessment said, yes, you would be good at child care. It didn't sit down and say, here are some possibilities.

A few assessors reported that they did recognize the importance of broadening registrants' knowledge about employment options by encouraging them to "set their sights higher" or by "refocusing clients in a rut," but this was not accomplished consistently across the counties studied.

The second issue was one of realism: balancing registrants' career preferences against their capabilities. This issue was not as troublesome or as pervasive as the first, however. Assessors reported that there was seldom much conflict between registrants' goals and capabilities: "Most clients are realistic," they said. In fact, the problem was more apt to be one of registrants' having too low an opinion of their own abilities. In cases where registrants did have unrealistic expectations for a career, the best assessors could do was to find an occupation that was in some way related to the goal. For instance, a registrant who wanted to study astrophysics was given a PREP assignment in a science laboratory, so that, as the assessor noted, "she will see

TABLE 10.1

PERCENT OF GAIN STAFF WHO RATED FACTORS AS "MOST IMPORTANT"
IN DETERMINING POST-ASSESSMENT SERVICES

Factors	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Total
Client's Prior Work Experience, Educational Background, and Capabilities	64%	65%	58%	80%	53%	50%	87%	75%	68%
Client's Preferences and Goals	9	47	63	32	33	73	52	46	49
Client's Attendance and Performance in Earlier Components	27	18	13	8	13	3	10	7	10
Current Availability of Education, Training and Work Experience	9	0	33	33	33	41	40	25	30
Costs of Program Component and Support Services	0	0	0	4	7	3	17	7	6
Client's Attitude and Motivation	36	29	29	24	50	38	27	29	32
Availability of Transportation, Child Care and Other Support Services	54	18	13	21	7	3	23	10	16
Sample Size	13	19	24	26	15	36	40	30	203

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and does not include a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno because they do not play a role in the assessment process.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

A "most important" factor is defined as one which was ranked first or second out of seven factors.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions J17a through J17g.

how she likes it.... She will become aware of other jobs in the field."

As noted earlier, other factors have limited the ability of the assessment process to accommodate registrant preferences and capabilities. The plans must specify a program in a "demand" occupation that can be completed within two years. In the shorter term, EDPs must lead to participation in education or training programs available in the community.

GAIN staff reported in field interviews that EDP recommendations for post-assessment training were sometimes constrained by the demand-occupations requirement. In particular, the demand occupations, depending on the county, sometimes were limited to low-wage entry-level jobs. One GAIN supervisor explained:

They [the assessors] are doing a good job, but every client is coming out with the same set of recommendations: word processing, office work, machinery repair. I just feel there must be some occupations for which there is not a big demand, but some client must have an interest in them.

In addition to their concern over the limited number of career choices designated as demand occupations, GAIN and assessment agency staff expressed their frustration with the fact that some of those occupations would not help registrants ultimately leave welfare. One assessor explained that most registrants would have to be "very lucky or very aggressive" to get off welfare through the employment possibilities she could offer. She said she felt uncomfortable about whether she was being honest about the opportunities she was offering, that is, whether she should have been more forceful in stressing the limitations of the occupations in demand.

Registrants' choice of post-assessment activities was also constrained by the availability of training programs. Staff reported that the timing of courses was an important selection criterion, that some training courses were full or had long waiting lists, and that some programs had entrance standards that GAIN participants did not meet. As Table 10.1 shows, 30 percent of the staff surveyed ranked the availability of programs as the first or second "most important" factor in making placements. The percentages on this question were higher in Stanislaus and Santa Clara, and lower in Napa and San Mateo. In Napa, 54 percent of the staff ranked the availability of support services as an important factor, most likely reflecting the rural geography of the county and its limited public transportation system.

One last problem limiting registrants' choice was the tendency of some assessors to recommend the services being offered by their own agency. Some welfare staff and some assessors pointed to an inherent conflict of interest when an assessment agency also runs training programs. For example, in one county where the community college performed assessments, the GAIN staff complained that the assessors were too often recommending educational programs rather than vocational programs: "They still think continuing a college education is the best thing for the client." The GAIN staff would have preferred their recommending PREP placements more often, particularly for those registrants who already had vocational skills. Some counties arranged for third parties who had no affiliation with the

assessment agencies to participate in the process, explicitly to prevent conflicts of interest stemming from recruiting.

The GAIN staff gave an estimate on the staff survey of the role of registrants' choice in the assessment process which illustrates the overall effect of these constraints. Approximately 60 percent of the staff reported that when registrants prefer particular services, the agency was "very often" able to develop a plan that matched those preferences.¹⁶

D. Views and Evolving Strategies of Assessment

As a summary of the way the GAIN staff viewed the assessment process, Table 10.2 shows that only one-third of the staff surveyed reported that assessments "very often" provided information about a registrant's goals and preferences that the staff did not already know. And only 45 percent of the GAIN staff reported that assessments "very often" informed them about registrant capabilities the staff did not already know, a relatively low number considering the special testing done by the assessment agency. The staff were more favorable in response to a question on selecting services: 57 percent reported assessments were "very often useful" in selecting services. Thus, although the occupational goals developed in assessment made placement decisions easier, GAIN staff reported that the assessments overall were not consistently providing new or helpful information about registrants.

These mixed evaluations of the assessment component led some GAIN programs to take on an expanded role in the process. Some programs, for example, asked assessors to include more occupational or training possibilities in their reports so that the GAIN staff would have more flexibility to adjust placements if they believed one option was superior to another or if training opportunities were greater in a particular occupation. Some welfare departments also began insisting that they have the final say in placement decisions, advising staff not to consider the assessment binding. For example, Stanislaus, whose GAIN staff were dissatisfied with the assessment component, gave their case managers more responsibilities in the process, as described above. Moreover, staff in some counties estimated that assessments could be done more cost-effectively in-house.

On the other hand, assessors often had a different perspective to offer. A number of them explained in interviews that it was hard for them to understand what the GAIN program needed, given its competing demands. They also reported not knowing how to improve their performance because they received little feedback on the types of programs registrants ultimately entered or on registrants' success in those programs.

¹⁶The percentage represents staff who answered "6" or "7" on a 7-point scale. The phrase in quotation marks indicates the endpoint of the scale. For the actual wording of the survey question, see Appendix C, question J10.

TABLE 10.2

GAIN STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE
ASSESSMENTS PROVIDED BY OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Survey Item	Wapa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Total
Percent of Respondents Who Answered:									
Assessment "very often" provided information about client capabilities that the staff did not already know	27%	44%	48%	63%	43%	26%	50%	50%	45%
Assessment "very often" provided information about the client's goals and preferences that the staff did not already know	27	25	22	40	14	15	53	39	30
Assessments were "very often useful" in selecting services for clients	45	56	71	68	33	23	75	72	57
Sample Size	13	19	24	26	15	36	40	30	203

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

NOTES: The sample for this table includes all GAIN line staff from each county and does not include a random subsample of eligibility workers in Fresno because they do not play a role in the assessment process.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Wapa had the lowest number and Fresno had the highest.

Percentages reported in the table are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Percentages report staff who answered "6" or "7" on a seven point scale. The phrase in quotations indicates the endpoint of the scale.

For actual wording of survey questions on this table, please see Appendix C, questions J5, J6, J7.

III. Post-Assessment Services

The evidence on experiences in post-assessment activities is scant because few registrants made it to this stage in GAIN before the study period ended. This section will therefore only briefly discuss issues that arose in providing post-assessment services.

A. Pre-Employment Preparation

Pre-employment preparation (PREP) is unpaid work experience in a public or nonprofit agency in exchange for the participant's welfare grant. Neither short-term nor long-term PREP was used extensively in many counties (see Chapter 4) because of the small number of registrants who reached this stage of the GAIN program.¹⁷ Most counties have reported no serious difficulties developing enough PREP slots to meet the demand.

Short-term PREP in most counties was generally viewed as a training program to teach registrants job skills and good work habits. Long-term PREP, on the other hand, was viewed somewhat differently -- sometimes as simply a last resort for registrants who had not participated effectively in earlier components. On the staff survey, 68 percent of the GAIN staff responded that they viewed short-term PREP as "primarily a learning and helping experience" rather than as "primarily a way to pay back society." In regard to long-term PREP, 51 percent of the staff gave the first of these responses.¹⁸ Staff in some counties reported that their attitude toward PREP became more favorable as more registrants entered the component and found the services they received to be valuable.

Kern was the only county to have a significant portion of registrants even in short-term PREP. Here, only registrants who already possessed some job skills were assigned to PREP slots. GAIN administrators reported that it would have been inappropriate to send other agencies unqualified individuals, since they would be difficult to work with and would need a great deal of assistance or supervision. GAIN staff in some counties reported using short-term PREP as a holding tank for registrants waiting to enter training programs.

B. Other Training Programs

Many counties relied on the JTPA agencies to make and pay for placements in post-assessment on-the-job training (OJT) or skills training. As was true with some other subcontracting arrangements, these engendered difficulties stemming from the divergent organizational perspectives of the GAIN and JTPA programs. JTPA agencies generally had

¹⁷One of the study counties delayed the operation of this component until the State Department of Social Services reached a decision on whether PREP participants were eligible for workers' compensation.

¹⁸The percentage represents staff who answered "6" or "7" on a 7-point scale. The phrases in quotation marks indicate the endpoints of the scale. For actual wording of the survey question, see Appendix C, question L1.

performance-based contracts and were not fully reimbursed for services until the participant became employed and remained employed for a specified period. As a result, the JTPA staff had an incentive to select GAIN registrants who could be placed in unsubsidized employment after a period of relatively short, low-cost training.¹⁹ Like EDD, the JTPA system was not designed to accommodate the view of many GAIN staff that long-term training may have been appropriate for some registrants or that low-paying jobs were not desirable for some registrants because they would not allow them to get off welfare.

The incentive structure of the JTPA system thus encouraged its staff to select registrants who were more "job-ready" and, in some cases, to reject GAIN registrants for OJT and training placements because they were not considered job-ready.²⁰ From the JTPA agency perspective, however, staff reported that the GAIN office was referring unqualified registrants. In one county these conflicting goals and practices made GAIN staff reluctant to use the services offered by the JTPA agency, which in turn reduced the supply of training slots. Thus, by the end of the study period, the services offered by the JTPA agencies had not been fully integrated into the GAIN program.

IV. Summary

The structure and curricula of job search services were relatively standard across counties; however, two different emphases of the activity emerged in the operation of the component. Some counties more strongly encouraged registrants to seek higher paying jobs in order to increase their chances of leaving and staying off welfare. These counties also placed greater emphasis on job search activities as an "informational experience" for many registrants, encouraging them to view the skills they were learning as being of use later, after further education and training. Other counties stressed the goal of immediate job entry. This view was more prevalent in counties where EDD operated the component and reflected the organizational goal of the agency -- job placements -- which placed a lower priority on the wage rate or career ladder of jobs offered to job search participants. In these counties, some inter-agency tensions arose between EDD and GAIN staff over the purpose of job search activities.

All of the counties developed complex, still-evolving assessment mechanisms, often including a long series of tests and meetings. This endeavor therefore represents a substantial commitment on the part of GAIN administrators and staff to individualize GAIN services at this stage of the program. Nonetheless, issues were encountered in these efforts to tailor services to registrants' career interests and capabilities. Moreover, the assessments provided by assessors outside the welfare department drew mixed opinions from GAIN staff, who indicated the information they received may not have always been helpful. Both GAIN staff and outside assessors seemed to realize that better communications between them concerning how the

¹⁹Cook (1985), p. 14.

²⁰JTPA agency administrators are now considering altering their performance standards to remove some of the incentives to select more job-ready participants.

process can be adapted to the needs of GAIN would go a long way toward resolving the problems that arose in their initial efforts to conduct this component.

The county GAIN programs did not utilize post-assessment training programs extensively during the study period. Based on early experiences, short-term PREP was structured as a training program to teach registrants job skills and was viewed positively by GAIN staff. Some difficulties emerged in arranging training services through JTPA agencies owing to the divergent organizational perspectives of the GAIN and JTPA programs.

APPENDIX A

TABLE A.1

GAIN EXEMPT AND DEFERRAL CRITERIA

Exempt	Deferred
- o A child who is under 16 years old. - o A child who is 16, 17, or 18 years old but goes to school (not college) full-time. - o A person who is temporarily ill or injured and the illness or injury would keep him or her from working. - o A person who is over 64 years old. - o A person who is physically or mentally unable to work or is pregnant. - o A person who lives so far away from the service provider that he or she cannot participate. - o A person who is required to stay home to take care of someone in the household who is unable to care for himself. - o A parent or caretaker of a child under 6 who is responsible for providing full-time care for the child (parent not in school). - o A person who has another adult in the home participating in GAIN. - o A person who works or expects to work 30 hours or more per week in regular employment that should last at least 30 days. - o A person who is a parent but is not the principal wage earner, when the principal wage earner in the home is registered for GAIN.	- o A caretaker relative who is enrolled in school for at least 12 units of credit and has a child under 6. - o A person who is so seriously dependent upon alcohol or drugs that work or training is precluded. - o A person who is having an emotional or mental problem that precludes participation. - o A person who is involved in legal difficulties, such as court-mandated appearances, which preclude participation. - o A person who does not have the legal right to work in the United States. - o A person who has a severe family crisis. - o A person who is in good standing in a union which controls referrals and hiring in the occupation. - o A person who is temporarily laid off from a job with a definite call-back date. - o A person who is employed for 15 or more hours per week. - o A person who has, or whose family has, a medically verified temporary illness.

SOURCE: GAIN Legislation.

APPENDIX B

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TABLE B.1
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF AFDC-FG MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY COUNTY

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Sex (%)								
Male	12.5	6.9	13.4	21.0	9.8	11.6	14.0	13.2
Female	87.5	93.1	86.6	79.0	90.2	88.4	86.0	86.8
Not Available ^a	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Family Status (%)								
Single Parent	87.5	67.2	87.8	81.5	77.7	84.8	86.0	82.6
Parent in Two-Parent Household	8.8	6.9	9.8	14.5	12.5	13.4	4.7	10.9
Dependent Child	0.0	5.2	1.2	3.2	3.6	0.9	4.7	2.2
Caretaker Relative	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.8	5.4	0.0	2.3	1.3
Not Available	3.8	20.7	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.9	2.3	2.9
Age (%)								
Less than 19	0.0	5.2	1.2	4.0	0.0	0.9	7.0	1.9
19-24	2.5	0.0	7.3	8.1	0.0	4.5	9.3	4.3
25-34	57.5	65.5	48.8	37.1	0.0	59.8	30.2	42.3
35-44	35.0	20.7	32.9	32.3	0.0	28.6	37.2	26.3
45 or Older	5.0	8.6	9.8	18.5	0.0	5.4	16.3	8.4
Not Available ^a	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.9	0.0	16.8
Average Age (Years)^b	33.83	32.84	33.84	35.41	N/A	32.97	34.12	33.93
Any Children (%)^c								
Less than 6 Years	2.5	5.2	20.7	17.7	8.0	8.0	20.9	10.9
Between 6 and 11 Years	67.5	62.1	59.8	50.8	62.5	68.7	46.5	61.0
Between 12 and 18 Years	43.7	22.4	43.9	51.6	42.0	49.1	65.1	45.5
19 and Older	3.8	0.0	1.2	4.0	0.0	2.7	4.7	2.4
Not Available ^a	0.0	29.3	0.0	0.8	0.9	2.7	2.3	3.3
Ethnicity (%)								
White	83.7	29.3	82.9	38.7	62.5	78.6	11.6	61.7
Hispanic	10.0	19.0	4.9	45.2	26.8	16.1	53.5	23.3
Black	2.5	39.7	4.9	8.9	9.8	2.7	2.3	8.2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2.5	0.0	1.2	2.4	0.0	0.0	2.3	1.3
Indochinese	0.0	3.4	2.4	2.4	0.0	0.9	25.6	2.9
Other Asian	1.3	5.2	2.4	2.4	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.6
Not Available ^a	0.0	3.4	1.2	0.0	0.9	0.9	4.7	1.0
Primary Language (%)								
English	91.2	81.0	92.7	77.4	93.7	90.2	62.8	86.4
Spanish	7.5	12.1	0.0	17.7	5.4	7.1	9.3	8.5
Chinese	0.0	1.7	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Laotian	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.6
Vietnamese	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	23.3	2.3
Other	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	2.3	0.6
Not Available ^a	1.3	3.4	2.4	0.8	0.9	0.0	2.3	1.3

(continued)

TABLE B.1 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Registrants with Limited English (%)								
Yes	10.0	6.9	4.9	17.7	4.5	4.5	27.9	9.9
No	86.2	70.7	93.9	81.5	94.6	95.5	67.4	86.8
Not Available ^a	3.8	22.4	1.2	0.8	0.9	0.0	4.7	3.3
High School Diploma or GED Received (%)								
Yes	68.7	53.4	64.6	29.0	38.4	34.8	27.9	46.1
No	25.0	31.0	25.6	60.5	47.3	61.6	62.8	44.6
Not Available ^a	6.3	15.5	9.8	10.5	14.3	3.6	9.3	9.3
Average Highest Grade Completed ^b	11.93	11.65	11.63	9.64	10.47	10.37	9.95	10.80
Registrants Who Scored Below 215 on Either Basic Skills Test (%)	21.3	50.0	12.2	31.5	28.6	31.3	39.5	28.5
Range of Score on Basic Skills Reading Test (%)								
214 or Below	1.3	10.3	1.2	12.1	9.8	4.5	7.0	6.3
215 or Above ^a	80.0	81.0	50.0	57.3	70.5	85.7	48.8	69.4
Not Available ^a	18.8	8.6	48.8	30.6	19.6	9.8	44.2	24.2
Range of Score on Basic Skills Math Test (%)								
214 or Below	21.3	50.0	12.2	31.5	28.6	31.3	39.5	28.5
215 or Above ^a	60.0	41.4	39.0	37.9	51.8	58.9	16.3	47.3
Not Available ^a	18.8	8.6	48.8	30.6	19.6	9.8	44.2	24.2
Determined to be in Need of Basic Education (%) ^{e, f}	33.8	63.8	26.8	69.4	53.6	67.9	65.1	53.1
High School Diploma Received and Scored 214 or Below on Basic Skills Math or Reading Test	3.8	19.0	2.4	8.9	3.6	4.5	4.7	5.9
No High School Diploma Received and Scored 214 or Below on Basic Skills Math or Reading Test	8.8	6.9	7.3	20.2	17.9	25.9	23.3	15.9
No High School Diploma Received and Scored 215 or Above on Both Basic Skills Tests	8.8	12.1	9.8	13.7	19.6	30.4	4.7	15.3

(continued)

TABLE B.1 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
High School Diploma Received and Had Limited English Ability	3.8	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	1.2
No High School Diploma Received and Had Limited English Ability	5.0	1.7	1.2	15.3	2.7	3.6	16.3	6.3
High School Diploma, Basic Skills Test Scores, or English Speaking Information Not Available, or Referred to Basic Education for Unknown Reason ^a	3.6	22.4	6.1	11.3	9.8	3.5	11.4	8.5
Current School/Training Status (%)								
In School, 12 Credits or More	18.8	6.9	26.8	9.7	8.0	6.3	9.3	12.6
In School, Less than 12 Credits	3.8	8.6	11.0	3.2	2.7	0.9	7.0	4.5
In Training, Full-time	1.3	3.4	1.2	7.3	0.9	1.8	4.7	2.8
In Training, Part-time	0.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.7
In Both School and Training	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.0	2.3	0.7
Not in School/Training	71.2	39.7	56.1	75.8	60.7	89.3	69.8	68.9
Not Available	5.0	36.2	4.9	4.0	24.1	1.8	2.3	9.8
AFDC Status (%)								
Applicant	45.0	8.6	39.0	29.8	51.8	59.8	11.6	40.0
Recipient	55.0	89.7	59.8	70.2	48.2	40.2	88.4	59.8
Not Available ^a	0.0	1.7	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Length of Time on Own AFDC Case (%)								
Never	16.3	15.5	24.4	22.6	15.2	18.8	4.7	17.9
Two Years or Less	30.0	44.8	35.4	37.9	19.6	22.3	23.3	29.8
More than Two Years	53.7	0.0	36.6	38.7	42.0	58.9	69.8	44.5
Not Available ^a	0.0	39.7	3.7	0.8	23.2	0.0	2.3	7.8
Registrant Discontinued from AFDC Two or More Times due to Employment in Prior Three Years (%)								
Yes	1.3	5.2	6.1	4.0	2.7	3.6	0.0	3.2
No	97.5	58.6	92.7	96.0	96.4	95.5	100.0	93.1
Not Available ^a	1.3	36.2	1.2	0.0	0.9	0.9	0.0	3.6

(continued)

TABLE B.1 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Employed in Prior 24 Months (%)								
Yes	55.0	39.7	56.1	58.1	64.3	56.2	44.2	55.5
No	43.7	27.6	39.0	41.9	34.8	43.7	51.2	40.5
Not Available ^a	1.3	32.8	4.9	0.0	0.9	0.0	4.7	4.0
Current Employment Status (%)								
Under 15 Hours per Week	3.8	1.7	2.4	4.0	2.7	0.0	2.3	2.6
15-29 Hours per Week	8.8	6.9	8.5	7.3	7.1	6.3	9.3	7.6
30 or More Hours per Week	3.8	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.9	0.9	0.0	1.5
Unemployed	40.0	32.8	24.4	66.9	78.6	75.0	32.6	54.3
Not in Labor Force	43.7	37.9	52.4	19.4	9.8	17.9	46.5	30.0
Not Available	0.0	20.7	8.5	2.4	0.9	0.0	9.3	4.0
Average Hourly Wage of Most Recent Job (\$) ^b	5.63	5.39	4.37	5.88	4.62	4.98	4.90	5.23
Sample Size	80	58	82	124	112	112	43	611

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

All percentage calculations and averages are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row. Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

^a "Not Available" refers to information not available for the registrant because the information was missing for the individual, this item was not requested by county staff, or the individual did not reach the stage of the program model where the information was collected.

^b All averages are calculated for only those registrants who have a valid datum for that item.

^c Distributions may add to more than 100.0 percent because sample members can have children in more than one category.

^d "High School Diploma or GED Received" includes individuals for whom degree information was not available but who completed the twelfth grade.

^e This statistic indicates the percentage of registrants included in the special study on basic education which only included mandatory registrants.

^f The percentages of registrants listed below who scored 214 or below on the basic skills test, did not have a high school diploma, or had limited English speaking ability are not equal to the corresponding percentages listed elsewhere on this table because of missing data and the omission of a small number of registrants from the basic education sample (see footnote 9 of Chapter 2).

TABLE B.2
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF AFDC-U MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY COUNTY

Characteristic	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Sex (%)								
Male	84.0	88.9	85.9	94.2	93.1	85.3	97.7	89.2
Female	16.0	7.4	14.1	5.8	6.9	14.7	2.3	10.5
Not Available ^a	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Family Status (%)								
Single Parent	2.0	3.7	1.2	0.0	1.7	2.6	0.0	1.6
Parent in Two-Parent Household	92.0	77.8	98.8	100.0	97.4	94.8	95.3	94.8
Dependent Child	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.1
Caretaker Relative	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.2
Not Available ^a	6.0	18.5	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.7	2.3	3.3
Age (%)								
Less than 19	0.0	0.0	2.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
19-24	18.0	11.1	17.6	18.3	0.0	17.2	0.0	13.0
25-34	44.0	29.6	56.5	44.2	0.0	43.1	46.5	37.0
35-44	26.0	37.0	21.2	24.0	0.0	30.2	32.6	22.7
45 or Older	10.0	22.2	2.4	12.5	0.0	8.6	20.9	9.3
Not Available ^a	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.9	0.0	17.5
Average Age (Years)^b	31.82	37.48	30.24	33.06	N/A	32.90	38.19	33.15
Any Children (%)^c								
Less than 6 Years	68.0	48.1	70.6	70.2	74.1	62.9	65.1	67.2
Between 6 and 11 Years	50.0	59.3	44.7	50.0	38.8	44.0	48.8	47.1
Between 12 and 18 Years	22.0	22.2	17.6	30.8	13.8	27.6	32.6	23.4
19 and Older	4.0	0.0	1.2	1.9	0.0	3.4	0.0	1.9
Not Available ^a	0.0	22.2	0.0	0.0	0.9	4.3	4.7	2.9
Ethnicity (%)								
White	58.0	11.1	74.1	26.9	48.3	67.2	9.3	47.2
Hispanic	32.0	33.3	7.1	59.6	40.5	19.0	18.6	32.3
Black	6.0	22.2	5.9	5.8	9.5	5.2	2.3	7.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2.0	0.0	5.9	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3
Indochinese	0.0	11.1	1.2	1.9	0.0	3.4	65.1	6.6
Other Asian	2.0	14.8	5.9	4.8	0.0	2.6	2.3	3.7
Not Available ^a	0.0	7.4	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.6	2.3	1.5
Primary Language (%)								
English	84.0	51.9	88.2	66.3	94.8	81.9	20.9	75.9
Spanish	14.0	25.9	2.4	27.9	4.3	10.3	11.6	13.6
Chinese	0.0	3.7	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.9	4.7	0.9
Laotian	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.7
Vietnamese	0.0	11.1	1.2	2.9	0.0	0.0	44.2	4.7
Other	0.0	3.7	5.9	1.0	0.0	4.3	16.3	3.0
Not Available ^a	2.0	3.7	1.2	0.0	0.9	0.0	2.3	1.2

(continued)

TABLE B.2 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Registrants with Limited English (%)								
Yes	12.0	18.5	10.6	29.8	4.3	13.8	62.8	18.1
No	86.0	63.0	87.1	70.2	94.8	86.2	34.9	79.4
Not Available ^a	2.0	18.5	2.4	0.0	0.9	0.0	2.3	2.5
High School Diploma or GED Received (%)								
Yes	44.0	44.4	47.1	30.8	42.2	35.3	25.6	39.0
No	50.0	44.4	48.2	67.3	44.8	61.2	53.5	53.7
Not Available ^a	6.0	11.1	4.7	1.9	12.9	3.4	20.9	7.3
Average Highest Grade Completed	11.09	10.83	11.07	9.22	10.81	10.26	9.05	10.40
Registrants Who Scored Below 215 On Either Basic Skills Test (%)	28.0	37.0	16.5	30.8	29.3	28.4	23.3	27.8
Range of Score on Basic Skills Reading Test (%)								
214 or Below	8.0	11.1	4.7	1.9	12.9	8.6	9.3	7.8
215 or Above	76.0	66.7	55.3	56.7	67.2	66.4	39.5	63.7
Not Available ^a	16.0	22.2	40.0	41.3	19.8	25.0	51.2	28.5
Range of Score on Basic Skills Math Test (%)								
214 or Below	28.0	37.0	14.1	30.8	27.6	25.9	18.6	26.4
215 or Above	56.0	40.7	44.7	27.9	52.6	49.1	30.2	44.9
Not Available ^a	16.0	22.2	41.2	41.3	19.8	25.0	51.2	28.7
Determined to be in Need of Basic Education (%) ^{e, f}	52.0	55.6	49.4	78.8	53.4	71.6	62.8	61.0
High School Diploma Received and Scored 214 or Below on Basic Skills Math or Reading Test	6.0	11.1	3.5	11.5	6.0	9.5	4.7	7.6
No High School Diploma Received and Scored 214 or Below on Basic Skills Math or Reading Test	14.0	14.8	11.8	17.3	21.6	19.0	7.0	16.0
No High School Diploma Received and Scored 215 or Above on Both Basic Skills Tests	14.0	7.4	17.6	12.5	17.2	2.4	2.3	14.8

(continued)

TABLE B.2 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
High School Diploma Received and Had Limited English Ability	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.3
No High School Diploma Received and Had Limited English Ability	10.0	14.8	5.9	27.9	1.7	11.2	37.2	13.8
High School Diploma, Basic Skills Test Scores, or English Speaking Information Not Available, or Referred to Basic Education for ^a Unknown Reason	8.0	7.5	10.6	9.6	10.3	9.5	7.0	8.5
Current School/Training Status (%)								
In School, 12 Credits or More	12.0	0.0	22.4	1.0	1.7	0.9	2.3	6.1
In School, Less than 12 Credits	2.0	11.1	4.7	1.0	2.6	0.9	4.7	2.9
In Training, Full-time	4.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	1.7	0.0	4.7	2.0
In Training, Part-time	4.0	0.0	1.2	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2
In Both School and Training	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.3
Not in School/Training	74.0	63.0	64.7	91.3	74.1	89.7	74.4	77.8
Not Available	4.0	25.9	7.1	1.9	19.0	8.6	14.0	9.7
AFDC Status (%)								
Applicant	80.0	25.9	42.4	49.0	74.1	56.9	9.3	55.9
Recipient	18.0	74.1	57.6	51.0	25.9	43.1	90.7	43.7
Not Available ^a	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Length of Time on Own AFDC Case (%)								
Never	42.0	18.5	32.9	37.5	25.0	34.5	7.0	31.7
Two Years or Less	46.0	44.4	30.6	41.3	20.7	31.9	30.2	35.4
More than Two Years	12.0	3.7	29.4	21.2	9.5	31.0	60.5	21.3
Not Available ^a	0.0	33.3	7.1	0.0	44.8	2.6	2.3	11.6
Registrant Discontinued from AFDC Two or More Times due to Employment in Prior Three Years (%)								
Yes	16.0	11.1	5.9	6.7	10.3	6.0	2.3	9.2
No	84.0	59.3	91.8	93.3	88.8	91.4	95.3	87.5
Not Available ^a	0.0	29.6	2.4	0.0	0.9	2.6	2.3	3.3

(continued)

TABLE B.2 (continued)

Characteristic	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Employed in Prior 24 Months (%)								
Yes	90.0	63.0	65.9	81.7	70.7	71.6	44.2	73.9
No	8.0	18.5	31.8	18.3	25.0	26.7	51.2	22.6
Not Available ^a	2.0	18.5	2.4	0.0	4.3	1.7	4.7	3.5
Current Employment Status (%)								
Under 15 Hours per Week	6.0	0.0	2.4	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.0	2.0
15-29 Hours per Week	4.0	3.7	5.9	6.7	0.9	2.6	11.6	4.5
30 or More Hours per Week	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.4
Unemployed	56.0	74.1	35.3	86.5	93.1	90.5	34.9	70.9
Not in Labor Force	34.0	11.1	40.0	5.8	3.4	4.3	46.5	18.7
Not Available ^b	0.0	11.1	14.1	0.0	0.9	1.7	7.0	3.5
Average Hourly Wage of Most Recent Job (\$) ^b	7.72	8.20	5.47	7.18	6.14	6.16	6.71	6.83
Sample Size	50	27	85	104	116	116	43	541

SOURCE and NOTES: See Table B.1.

TABLE B.3

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF AFDC-FG VOLUNTARY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY COUNTY

Characteristic	Napa	San Mateo	Ventura	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Sex (%)					
Male	3.8	0.0	1.7	2.6	2.4
Female	96.2	100.0	98.3	97.4	97.6
Not Available ^a	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Family Status (%)					
Single Parent	75.2	72.7	90.0	100.0	83.2
Parent in Two-Parent Household	14.3	6.8	10.0	0.0	9.4
Dependent Child	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Caretaker Relative	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not Available ^a	10.5	20.5	0.0	0.0	7.4
Age (%)					
Less than 19	3.0	2.3	3.3	7.7	3.8
19-24	33.8	25.0	33.3	53.8	35.7
25-34	48.1	52.3	55.0	33.3	48.1
35-44	12.8	20.5	8.3	5.1	11.5
45 or Older ^a	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Not Available ^a	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Average Age (Years) ^b	27.96	28.34	26.18	24.72	26.97
Any Children (%) ^c					
Less than 6 Years	85.7	68.2	93.3	97.4	86.9
Between 6 and 11 Years	35.3	20.5	36.7	20.5	30.6
Between 12 and 18 Years	18.0	11.4	8.3	10.3	12.9
Greater than 19 ^a	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Not Available ^a	0.0	20.5	0.0	0.0	3.4
Ethnicity (%)					
White	80.5	43.2	56.7	28.2	58.6
Hispanic	15.8	15.9	28.3	51.3	25.5
Black	1.5	36.4	11.7	12.8	12.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Indochinese	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.4
Other Asian ^a	0.8	2.3	3.3	5.1	2.5
Not Available ^a	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.4
Primary Language (%)					
English	93.2	93.2	98.3	97.4	95.4
Spanish	6.0	4.5	1.7	0.0	3.5
Chinese	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Laotian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Vietnamese	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.4
Not Available ^a	0.8	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.7
Registrants with Limited English (%)					
Yes	6.8	2.3	5.0	2.6	4.8
No	91.7	86.4	95.0	97.4	92.7
Not Available ^a	1.5	11.4	0.0	0.0	2.5

(continued)

TABLE B.3 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Ventura	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
High School Diploma or GED Received (%)					
Yes	55.6	56.8	61.7	38.5	54.5
No	39.1	36.4	30.0	38.5	36.0
Not Available ^a	5.3	6.8	8.3	23.1	9.5
Average Highest Grade Completed ^b	11.46	11.58	11.53	10.97	11.42
Registrants Who Scored Below 215 On Either Basic Skills Test (%)	18.0	27.3	30.0	25.6	24.2
Range of Score on Basic Skills Reading Test (%)					
214 or Below	0.8	4.5	6.7	0.0	2.9
215 or Above	91.7	84.1	86.7	61.5	83.8
Not Available ^a	7.5	11.4	6.7	38.5	13.3
Range of Score on Basic Skills Math Test (%)					
214 or Below	18.0	27.3	30.0	25.6	24.2
215 or Above	74.4	61.4	63.3	35.9	62.5
Not Available ^a	7.5	11.4	6.7	38.5	13.3
Current School/Training Status (%)					
In School, 12 Credits or More	9.0	4.5	5.0	5.1	6.5
In School, Less than 12 Credits	8.3	6.8	1.7	5.1	5.7
In Training, Full-time	0.8	11.4	15.0	38.5	13.0
In Training, Part-time	0.0	2.3	1.7	0.0	0.8
In Both School and Training	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not in School/Training	69.2	38.6	73.3	48.7	61.7
Not Available ^a	12.8	36.4	3.3	2.6	12.3
AFDC Status (%)					
Applicant	59.4	11.4	20.0	12.8	32.5
Recipient	40.6	84.1	80.0	84.6	66.3
Not Available ^a	0.0	4.5	0.0	2.6	1.2
Length of Time on Own AFDC Case (%)					
Never	21.8	15.9	10.0	0.0	13.8
Two Years or Less	44.4	54.5	51.7	43.6	47.9
More Than Two Years	33.8	0.0	38.3	53.8	32.9
Not Available ^a	0.0	29.5	0.0	2.6	5.4
Registrant Discontinued from AFDC Two or More Times Due to Employment in Prior Three Years (%)					
Yes	2.3	4.5	1.7	0.0	2.1
No	96.2	68.2	98.3	100.0	92.8
Not Available ^a	1.5	27.3	0.0	0.0	5.1

(continued)

TABLE B.3 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Ventura	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Employed in Prior 24 Months (%)					
Yes	54.1	50.0	38.3	51.3	48.6
No	44.4	20.5	61.7	43.6	45.0
Not Available ^a	1.5	29.5	0.0	5.1	6.4
Current Employment Status (%)					
Under 15 Hours per Week	3.8	6.8	1.7	0.0	3.0
15-29 Hours Per Week	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
30 or More Hours Per Week	2.3	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.3
Unemployed	38.3	27.3	73.3	38.5	46.1
Not in Labor Force	50.4	34.1	23.3	61.5	42.2
Not Available	0.8	31.8	0.0	0.0	5.6
Average Hourly Wage ^b of Most Recent Job (\$)	4.62	5.41	4.80	4.71	4.82
Sample Size	133	44	60	39	276

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

All percentage calculations and averages are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row. Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

^a "Not Available" refers to information not available for the registrant because the information was missing for the individual, this item was not requested by county staff, or the individual did not reach the stage of the program model where the information was collected.

^b All averages are calculated for only those registrants who have a valid datum for that item.

^c Distributions may add to more than 100.0 percent because sample members can have children in more than one category.

^d "High School Diploma or GED Received" includes individuals for whom degree information was not available but who completed the twelfth grade.

TABLE B.4

NUMBER OF STAFF WHO COMPLETED STAFF ACTIVITIES AND ATTITUDES SURVEY,
BY COUNTY

County	GAIN		Eligibility	
	Line Staff	Supervisors	Line Staff	Supervisors
Napa	13	0	16	2
San Mateo	19	2	9	2
Butte	24	4	30	6
Ventura	26	4	29	11
Kern	15	2	34	12
Stanislaus	36	5	28	10
Stana Clara	40	5	41	10
Fresno	30	3	37	10
Total	203	25	224	63

SOURCE: MDRC Staff Activities and Attitudes Survey.

APPENDIX C

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APPENDIX C

SELECTED QUESTIONS FOR GAIN AND ELIGIBILITY WORKER¹ STAFF
FROM THE STAFF ACTIVITIES AND ATTITUDES SURVEY

- A1. All things considered, how satisfied are you with your current job?
- A2. How would you describe worker morale among the staff who work on the GAIN program?
- A3. Compared to staff working in other areas of your agency, is the morale of the staff who work on the GAIN program:
- A7. In my job I feel I work with clients as part of a team rather than just on my own.
- A8. Do you find the paperwork that you need to do on your job not very burdensome or very burdensome?
- A9. In general, how much of the paperwork do you feel is necessary or worthwhile?
- A11. If I do my job well, this will improve my standing among the people I work with.
- A12. In the part of the agency in which I work, merit is recognized.
- A13. In the part of the agency in which you work, how likely are workers to go out of their way to help a client?
- A14. In the part of the agency in which I work, workers are more likely to go out of their way to help a client than in the rest of the agency.
- A16. The staff meetings held by supervisors and managers that I attend have more to do with administrative issues than with helping clients.
- A17. I feel my agency wants me to set a tough tone with clients.
- A19. If the people in my job do good work, we can really improve the lives of welfare recipients.
- A20. For the most part, the people in my job are doing their jobs well.
- B1. Based on the practices in your agency today, what would you say is the more important goal of your agency: to help clients get jobs as quickly as possible or to raise the education or skill levels of clients so that they can get jobs in the future.
- B2. In your opinion, which should be the more important goal of your agency: to help clients get jobs as quickly as possible or to raise the education or skill levels of clients so that they can get jobs in the future.

- C1. When they are first entering the GAIN program, how many recipients feel that having a regular job is an important goal in their lives?
- C2. When people have been on welfare for a long time, how many would you say are satisfied and have little desire to improve themselves?
- C3. If given appropriate help, how many welfare recipients would work hard to become self-supporting?
- C4. Because of the low pay and instability of the jobs that are available to them, I think it is acceptable for welfare recipients to stay on welfare.
- C5. Many people on welfare could get off welfare if they really looked hard for a job.
- C6. Many people who apply for welfare would rather be on welfare than work to support their families.
- C7. How many welfare recipients feel badly about themselves because they are on welfare?
- C11. How many welfare recipients come from groups in our society where it is no shame to be on welfare?
- C13. If we give welfare recipients more choices about the services they will receive from welfare, how many will NOT use these choices wisely?
- C14. When they get jobs, welfare recipients are as hard-working as other employees.
- C15. Which is more important in leading to welfare: that recipients had few opportunities or that they made poor use of the opportunities that were available to them?
- D3. Overall how would you rate your relationships with most clients?
- D4. How often do you feel that clients do not talk candidly to you?
- D5. Do you ever feel that clients are suspicious and apprehensive of you as a GAIN worker, even after you have worked with them awhile?
- D7. Do you have a caseload of clients whom you are expected to follow over time?
 - a. What percentage of a full caseload are you handling?
 - b. How many GAIN registrants are on your caseload today?
- E1. When a client is first being assigned to an activity under GAIN, how long is the interview with this client (after any orientation or formal testing) in order to discuss and decide about this assignment?

- E2. Do you feel that in your program not enough time or enough time is being spent with clients during these interviews?
- E3. In this type of interview, how much effort does the staff make:
- a. To learn about the client's family problems in depth?
 - b. To learn about the client's goals and motivation to work in depth?
- F2. Do you feel that few or many clients are overstating their barriers to participating in the GAIN program?
- H3. Suppose a client is participating in a GAIN activity and has not encountered any barriers or troubles. Would a staff member in your agency arrange a one-on-one meeting or call the client just to maintain contact with the client?
- H6. For each of the following activities, suppose a client has been assigned to the activity but has not attended it at all. How long, on average, would it take for the staff person monitoring this client to learn about this situation from the service provider?
- a. Remedial Education
 - b. Vocational Education or Training
- H7. For each of the GAIN assignments below, suppose a client has been regularly attending the activity for a month but is not well motivated and has not been participating effectively. By the end of the month, how likely is it that a staff member at your agency would have contacted the client to talk about the situation?
- a. Remedial Education
 - b. Vocational Education or Training
- H13. When staff members in your agency are monitoring clients, how frequently are they likely to encounter each of the following problems?
- b. A client attends a remediation or vocational training program irregularly.
- H14. How do you feel the staff of your agency who monitor clients are viewed by these clients?
- I1. After a short time in GAIN, an average welfare mother is offered a low-skill, low-paying job that would make her slightly better off financially. Assume she has two choices: either to take the job and leave welfare OR to stay on welfare and wait for a better opportunity. If you were asked, what would your personal advice to this client be?

- I2. What advice do you feel most of the GAIN staff would give a client of this type?
- I3. What advice would your supervisor want you to give to a client of this type?
- I4. Sometimes clients spend more time in a program component than is necessary for them or helpful to them in becoming more self-supporting. For each of the following activities, indicate whether you feel there is currently a sizable percentage of GAIN clients that have been in this activity too long and would benefit from moving to a new activity.
- a. Adult Basic Education
 - b. English as a Second Language
 - c. High School Equivalency (GED) programs
 - d. Individual job search assignments
 - e. Job club and supervised job search activities
 - f. Vocational education and training programs
 - g. On-the-job training assignments
 - h. Short-term PREP
 - i. Long-term PREP
 - j. People who are deferred from GAIN participation
- J1. Who is more responsible for developing an employment plan for him or her? The staff of your agency? The staff of another agency?
- J2. Excluding any formal assessments of the client, how long, in total, would the staff of your agency spend with this client (at one or more meetings) in order to decide upon her subsequent GAIN assignment and develop an employment plan?
- J3. Do you feel that in your agency not enough time or enough time is being spent with clients in these meetings?
- J5. How often do these formal assessments provide the staff developing the client's employment plan with information about the client's capabilities that the staff did not already know?
- J6. How often do these formal assessments provide the staff developing the client's employment plan with information about the client's goals and preferences that the staff did not already know?

- J7. How useful to the staff developing the client's employment plan are these formal assessments in selecting services for clients?
- J10. Among clients who do prefer particular services, how frequently is your agency able to develop an employment plan that matches the client's preferences?
- J17. Below is a list of factors that may be relevant in deciding the next steps in GAIN for a client who needs a longer-term employment plan. Put a "1" next to the factor that would probably be most important today in determining the employment and training services this client would receive; a "2" next to the second most important factor; and so on until you have ranked all of the factors from 1 to 7.
- a. ____ The client's prior work experience, educational background, and capabilities
 - b. ____ The client's preferences and goals
 - c. ____ The client's attendance and performance in earlier service components
 - d. ____ The current availability of education, training and work experience slots
 - e. ____ The costs of the program component and necessary support services
 - f. ____ The client's attitude and motivation
 - g. ____ The availability of transportation, child care, and other necessary support services
- K2. In your opinion, are the financial sanctions currently available to the welfare agency an ineffective or effective tool for improving client compliance?
- K3. In your opinion, is money management an ineffective or effective tool for improving client compliance?
- K4. In your opinion, does the formal conciliation and sanctioning process currently operating in your program allow too few or too many "second chances" for clients?
- K5. In your opinion, is the formal conciliation and sanctioning process currently being used too little or too much in your agency?
- L1. Does your agency see short-term PREP and long-term PREP as primarily a way to pay back society or as primarily a learning and helping experience for clients?
- a. Short-term PREP
 - b. Long-term PREP

Below are a list of services that may be provided to GAIN clients as part of their GAIN employment plan.

- o For clients who are assigned to this type of service in your agency, how worthwhile is it to them in helping them become self-supporting?
- M1b. Programs for Adult Basic Education
- M2b. Programs for English as a Second Language
- M3b. Programs for High School Equivalency Degrees

Below is a list of possible goals of GAIN. For each goal:

- o How strongly is this goal being emphasized by your agency in the way it has developed GAIN?
- o How important an objective do you personally feel this goal should be?
- P1. To get welfare clients into unsubsidized jobs.
- P2. To reduce welfare costs for the government in the long-run.
- P3. To make continuous participation in GAIN mandatory, rather than voluntary, for non-exempt clients.
- P4. To reduce the stigma and psychological burden of clients while on welfare.
- P5. To give clients more choice about the services they receive.
- P6. To make the requirements for welfare more demanding.
- P7. To improve the relationship between welfare workers and clients.
- S1. What is your age?
- S2. What is your sex?
- S4. How long have you been employed by this agency?
- S9. Did you ever have a position with the WIN program?
- S10. Were you ever an employee of a JTPA agency or program funded by JTPA?
- S12. Have you ever received welfare benefits?
- S13. What is your educational background?
 - a. _____ Did not finish high school
 - b. _____ GED

- c. _____ High School Diploma
- d. _____ Associate's Degree
- e. _____ Some College
- f. _____ Bachelor's Degree
- g. _____ Some graduate work
- h. _____ Master of Social Work Degree
- i. _____ Other Master's Degree

NOTES: ¹ This appendix includes questions asked of both GAIN and eligibility worker staff.

APPENDIX D

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APPENDIX D

SELECTED QUESTIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY WORKER STAFF
FROM THE STAFF ACTIVITIES AND ATTITUDES SURVEY¹

- A25. If someone really wants to get off welfare, they can get a lot of help from my agency.
- B6. In your opinion, if clients get the typical GAIN services provided by your agency:
- a. How helpful will these services be to them in getting off welfare?
 - b. In feeling better about themselves?
- G1. How knowledgeable about the GAIN program are eligibility workers in your agency?
- G2. Have you attended any training sessions about the GAIN program over the last year?
- a. NO YES
 - b. If yes, how many _____
- H3. On average, how much time during an eligibility interview do you spend discussing the GAIN program with the following types of clients:
- a. A non-exempt client:
 - b. An exempt client:
- H5. When you discuss the GAIN program with clients during eligibility interviews, which of the following topics might be included?
- a. The rules that determine whether they are mandatory participants in the GAIN program.
 - b. What clients are responsible for doing under GAIN.
 - c. The kinds of job search, education, training, work experience placements, and/or support services they are entitled to under GAIN.
 - d. The current availability of different types of job search, education, training, work experience placements, and/or support services in your GAIN program.
 - e. Advice about how to get the kinds of GAIN services that the client really wants.
 - f. Advice about which kinds of GAIN services might be most valuable to the client or best suited to his or her needs.

- H8. How strongly are eligibility workers supposed to urge exempt clients to voluntarily enter the GAIN program?
- H9. How much effort do you put into urging exempt clients to volunteer for GAIN?
- H10. How strongly are eligibility workers supposed to try to make mandatory clients enthusiastic about GAIN?
- H11. How much effort do you put into making mandatory clients enthusiastic about GAIN?
- K1. Do you feel that the job of the eligibility worker has been affected by GAIN?
- K2. Has the job of the eligibility worker been easier or harder under GAIN?
- K3. Has the job of the eligibility worker been less satisfying or more satisfying under GAIN?
- K4. GAIN has made the paperwork much harder for eligibility workers.
- K5. Because of GAIN, I feel I have something positive to offer clients.

NOTES: ¹This appendix includes questions asked of eligibility worker staff only.

APPENDIX E

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TABLE E.1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAM STATUSES OF AFDC-FG MANDATORY REGISTRANTS
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION, BY COUNTY

Program Status	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total	Weighted Total
Active at Least One Day in a GAIN Component	55.8	31.2	38.5	41.2	48.0	27.3	25.5	38.2	33.5
Deregistered, Not Active	24.4	32.5	26.6	27.7	31.8	33.6	17.7	27.7	24.9
Deferred, Not Deregistered or Active	18.6	23.6	14.7	25.0	14.9	30.1	17.7	20.6	19.6
Not Deferred, Deregistered or Active	1.2	12.7	20.3	6.1	5.4	9.1	39.1	13.4	22.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	86	157	143	148	148	143	141	966	966

SOURCE: MDRC's participant sample.

NOTES: The totals in the first column, entitled "Unweighted Total," are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county. The totals in the second column, entitled "Weighted Total," are weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

"Active" means that the individual attended job search, education, training and work experience activities for at least one day. It does not include orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

TABLE E.2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAM STATUSES OF AFDC-U MANDATORY REGISTRANTS
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION, BY COUNTY

Program Status	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total	Weighted Total
Active at Least One Day in a GAIN Component	64.0	32.9	33.1	37.8	47.7	23.8	35.1	39.2	36.1
Deregistered, Not Active	36.0	43.4	38.3	39.4	44.3	45.7	13.0	37.2	31.1
Deferred, Not Deregistered or Active	0.0	9.2	9.7	18.9	3.4	19.9	13.0	10.6	12.2
Not Deferred, Deregistered or Active	0.0	14.4	18.8	3.9	4.7	10.6	39.0	13.1	20.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	50	76	154	127	149	151	131	838	838

SOURCE: MDRC's participant sample.

NOTES: The totals in the first column, entitled "Unweighted Total," are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county. The totals in the second column, entitled "Weighted Total," are weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

"Active" means that the individual attended job search, education, training and work experience activities for at least one day. It does not include orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

TABLE E.3

PERCENT OF ALL AFDC-U MANDATORY REGISTRANTS INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION, BY COUNTY

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Unweighted Total
Attended Orientation ^{a,b}	100.0%	57.9%	68.8%	85.0%	80.5%	77.5%	60.3%	---	75.7%
Participated, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training ^c	64.0	32.9	33.1	37.8	47.7	23.8	35.1	36.7	38.9
Participated, Excluding Self-Initiated Education or Training ^c	58.0	27.6	16.9	33.9	43.0	23.8	30.5	32.7	33.3
Participated in Any Job Search	42.0	17.1	6.5	16.5	31.5	12.6	12.2	3.3	17.7
Job Club	42.0	7.9	6.5	4.7	4.0	8.6	12.2	3.3	11.2
Supervised Job Search ^b	6.0	11.8	0.0	13.4	26.2	0.0	0.0	---	7.2
90-Day Job Search	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	2.0	4.0	0.0	---	0.8
Participated in Any Education or Training	40.0	25.0	28.6	25.2	22.8	15.2	23.7	34.0	26.8
Self-Initiated Education or Training	8.0	7.9	16.2	4.7	4.7	0.7	4.6	4.0	6.3
Program-Referred Education or Training	32.0	18.4	12.3	20.5	18.1	14.6	19.1	30.0	20.6
Basic Education ^e	22.0	15.8	11.7	20.5	17.4	14.6	19.1	28.0	18.6
English as a Second Language	12.0	5.3	2.6	9.4	0.7	2.6	16.8	16.7	8.3
Adult Basic Education	8.0	10.5	3.2	9.4	9.4	7.9	3.1	10.0	7.7
GED Preparation	2.0	2.6	6.5	3.1	7.4	4.0	0.0	4.0	3.7
Post-Assessment Education or Training	10.0	5.3	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.4
Assessed	10.0	9.2	4.5	9.4	6.7	2.6	2.3	8.7	6.7
Participated in Work Experience ^b	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.7	0.0	---	0.3

(continued)

TABLE E.3 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Fresno	Unweighted Total
Deferred ^b	18.0%	27.6%	14.3%	53.5%	20.8%	45.0%	22.1%	---	28.8%
Referred for Money Management ^b	0.0	6.6	0.6	7.1	6.0	4.6	4.6	---	4.2
Deregistered ^b	80.0	51.3	39.6	53.5	63.8	53.6	15.3	---	51.0
Due to Sanctioning	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	---	0.5
Due to Other Reasons	80.0	51.3	38.3	53.5	61.7	53.6	15.3	---	50.5
Received GED, Post-Appraisal	0.0	0.0	2.6	3.1	1.3	1.3	0.0	1.3	1.2
Employed ^{b, f}	48.0	30.3	18.2	32.3	31.5	37.1	19.1	---	30.9
Sample Size	50	76	154	127	149	151	131	150	988

SOURCE and NOTES: See Table 4.4.

TABLE E.4

PERCENT OF ALL AFDC-FG VOLUNTARY REGISTRANTS INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES
WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION, BY COUNTY

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Ventura	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Attended Orientation ^a	100.0%	63.0%	69.7%	61.5%	73.5%
Participated, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training	48.2	39.8	46.1	45.1	44.8
Participated, Excluding Self-Initiated Education or Training	38.3	26.9	28.1	19.8	28.3
Participated in Any Job Search	27.0	7.4	16.9	9.9	15.3
Job Club	26.2	3.7	11.2	9.9	12.8
Supervised Job Search	6.4	3.7	5.6	0.0	3.9
90-Day Job Search	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.3
Participated in Any Education or Training	37.6	37.0	32.6	38.5	36.4
Self-Initiated Education or Training	10.6	16.7	18.0	27.5	18.2
Program-Referred Education or Training	27.7	23.1	14.6	12.1	19.4
Basic Education ^d	22.0	20.4	13.5	12.1	17.0
English as a Second Language	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.0
Adult Basic Education	9.2	8.3	6.7	5.5	7.4
GED Preparation	12.1	13.0	5.6	5.5	9.0
Post-Assessment Educa- tion or Training	12.8	2.8	1.1	1.1	4.4
Assessed	16.3	5.6	6.7	2.2	7.7
Participated in Work Experience	2.1	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.8
Deferred	5.7	9.3	18.0	2.2	8.8
Referred for Money Management	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Deregistered	73.0	58.3	61.8	52.7	61.5
Due to Sanctioning	4.3	13.0	24.7	1.1	10.8
Due to Other Reasons	68.8	45.4	37.1	51.6	50.7
Received GED, Post-Appraisal	3.5	1.9	2.2	4.4	3.0
Employed ^e	17.7	15.7	22.5	12.1	17.0
Sample Size	141	108	89	91	429

(continued)

TABLE E.4 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC's participant flow sample.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

Subcategory percentages may not add to category percentages because sample members can be included in more than one activity.

^a "Attended Orientation" includes individuals who attended orientation within six months of registration.

^b This includes participation in job search, education, training and work experience activities. It does not include attendance at orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

^c Data are available only for the first occurrence of self-initiated education or training.

^d Included here is program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

^e "Employed" includes any indication of employment found in individuals' casefiles, including employment that resulted in deferral or deregistration or that occurred after an individual left welfare.

APPENDIX F

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TABLE F.1
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF GAIN STATUSES
OF AFDC-FG MANDATORY REGISTRANTS AT
TWO AND SIX MONTHS AFTER REGISTRATION, BY COUNTY

Program Status	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Un-weighted Total
<u>GAIN Status After Two Months</u>								
Attended Orientation ^a	93.0%	36.9%	57.3%	83.8%	75.7%	78.3%	30.5%	65.1%
Deferred ^b	3.5	6.4	4.9	0.0	6.8	11.2	0.7	4.8
Deregistered ^c	1.2	6.4	7.0	6.1	7.4	7.0	2.8	5.4
Not Oriented, Deferred or Deregistered	2.3	50.3	30.8	10.2	10.1	3.5	66.0	24.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<u>GAIN Status After Six Months</u>								
Attended Orientation ^d	93.0	63.7	69.9	88.5	82.4	81.1	56.7	76.5
Deferred ^e	3.5	11.5	4.9	0.0	4.1	9.1	0.7	4.9
Deregistered ^f	3.5	19.1	16.1	10.8	10.8	9.1	9.9	11.3
Not Oriented, Deferred, or Deregistered	0.0	5.7	9.1	0.7	2.7	0.7	32.6	7.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	86	157	143	148	148	143	141	966

SOURCE: MDRC's participant flow sample.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

^a This status includes all registrants who attended orientation within two months of registration, irrespective of prior or subsequent GAIN status.

^b This status includes registrants who were deferred within two months of registration and were not subsequently oriented or deregistered during this period.

(continued)

TABLE F.1 (continued)

^c This status includes registrants who were deregistered within two months of registration and did not subsequently attend orientation during this period.

^d This status includes all registrants who attended orientation within six months of registration, irrespective of prior or subsequent GAIN statuses.

^e This status includes registrants who were deferred within six months of registration and were not subsequently oriented or deregistered during this period.

^f This status includes registrants who were deregistered within six months of registration and did not subsequently attend orientation during this period.

TABLE F.2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF
GAIN STATUSES OF AFDC-U MANDATORY REGISTRANTS
TWO AND SIX MONTHS AFTER REGISTRATION, BY COUNTY

Program Status	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Un- weighted Total
<u>GAIN Status After Two Months</u>								
Attended Orientation ^a	100.0%	35.5%	55.2%	81.9%	77.9%	76.8%	32.8%	65.7%
Deferred ^b	0.0	5.3	1.3	0.8	2.7	7.9	0.8	2.7
Deregistered ^c	0.0	6.6	11.0	8.7	15.4	9.3	2.3	7.6
Not Oriented, Deferred or Deregistered	0.0	52.6	32.5	8.6	4.0	6.0	64.1	24.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<u>GAIN Status After Six Months</u>								
Attended Orientation ^d	100.0	56.6	66.2	85.0	79.9	77.5	60.3	75.0
Deferred ^e	0.0	7.9	2.6	0.8	1.3	8.6	0.0	3.0
Deregistered ^f	0.0	30.3	24.7	13.4	18.1	13.2	9.2	15.5
Not Oriented, Deferred, or Deregistered	0.0	5.3	6.5	0.8	0.7	0.7	30.5	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	50	76	154	127	149	151	131	838

SOURCE and NOTES: See Table F.1.

TABLE F.3

PERCENT OF CONTACTS BETWEEN CASE MANAGERS AND ORIENTATION NONATTENDERS
AND BETWEEN ELIGIBILITY WORKERS AND ORIENTATION
NONATTENDERS, BY TYPE OF CONTACT AND COUNTY

Type and Frequency of Contact	Ventura	Kern	Santa Clara
Case Manager Sent Registrant Notice of Rescheduled Appointment Without Beginning Conciliation Process			
0 Contacts	71.7%	84.0%	80.7%
1 Contact	21.7	16.0	14.3
2 Contacts	2.2	0.0	5.0
3 or More Contacts	4.3	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Case Manager Sent Registrant Problem Participation Notice (GAIN 22)			
0 Contacts	26.1	48.0	77.6
1 Contact	65.2	38.0	19.3
2 Contacts	4.3	12.0	3.1
3 or More Contacts	4.3	2.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Case Manager Sent Registrant Other Notice Requesting Explanation for Missed Orientation			
0 Contacts	93.5	92.0	96.9
1 Contact	4.3	8.0	2.5
2 Contacts	2.2	0.0	0.6
3 or More Contacts	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Telephone Conversations between Case Manager and Registrant			
0 Contacts	84.8	80.0	89.4
1 Contact	10.9	16.0	7.5
2 Contacts	0.0	2.0	0.6
3 or More Contacts	4.3	2.0	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

(continued)

TABLE F.3 (continued)

Type and Frequency of Contact	Ventura	Kern	Santa Clara
Conversations between Case Manager and Registrant at GAIN Office			
0 Contacts	93.5%	90.0%	96.3%
1 Contact	6.5	10.0	3.7
2 Contacts	0.0	0.0	0.0
3 or More Contacts	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Other Contacts between Case Manager and Registrant^a			
0 Contacts	82.6	88.0	95.0
1 Contact	13.0	10.0	3.1
2 Contacts	4.3	0.0	0.0
3 or More Contacts	0.0	2.0	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Contacts between Eligibility Worker and Registrant			
0 Contacts	65.2	64.0	97.5
1 Contact	28.3	34.0	1.9
2 Contacts	6.5	2.0	0.0
3 or More Contacts	0.0	0.0	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	46	50	161

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who did not attend orientation within two months of registration. The combined sample of AFDC-FG and AFDC-U mandatory registrants is presented.

NOTES: The order in which the three counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Of the three, Madera had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

^a "Other Contacts" includes visits to the registrant's home and communications with other members of the registrant's household, doctors, or other third parties.

APPENDIX G

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TABLE G.1

PERCENT OF ALL AFDC-U MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS
INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Participated, Including Self-Initiated Education or Training	62.0%	66.7%	42.4%	43.3%	58.6%	25.0%	67.4%	50.3%
Participated, Excluding Self-Initiated Education or Training	56.0	59.3	23.5	38.5	52.6	25.0	60.5	43.8
Participated in Any Job Search	40.0	37.0	8.2	17.3	37.1	15.5	30.2	26.6
Job Club	40.0	18.5	8.2	4.8	5.2	11.2	30.2	16.9
Supervised Job Search	4.0	25.9	0.0	14.4	31.0	0.0	0.0	10.7
90-Day Job Search	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.7	4.3	0.0	1.2
Participated in Any Education or Training	40.0	44.4	35.3	29.8	27.6	12.9	37.2	31.1
Self-Initiated Education or Training	8.0	11.1	18.8	5.8	6.0	0.9	7.0	7.5
Program-Referred Education or Training	32.0	37.0	16.5	24.0	21.6	12.1	30.2	23.9
Basic Education ^C	22.0	33.3	15.3	24.0	20.7	12.1	30.2	21.1
English as a Second Language	12.0	11.1	2.4	11.5	0.9	1.7	25.6	8.1
Adult Basic Education	8.0	22.2	4.7	10.6	11.2	7.8	4.7	9.4
GED Preparation	2.0	3.7	8.2	1.9	8.6	2.6	0.0	3.9
Post-Assessment Education or Training	10.0	3.7	1.2	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	2.7
Assessed	8.0	18.5	7.1	10.6	6.9	2.6	2.3	7.7
Participated in Work Experience	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.9	0.0	0.4
Deferred	14.0	22.2	17.6	58.7	21.6	39.7	34.9	30.1
Referred for Money Management	0.0	3.7	0.0	2.9	2.6	0.9	0.0	1.4
Deregistered	58.0	25.9	22.4	33.7	37.9	33.6	7.0	35.8
Due to Sanctioning	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.1
Due to Other Reasons	58.0	25.9	22.4	33.7	37.0	33.6	7.0	35.7

(continued)

TABLE G.1 (continued)

Activity	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Received GED, Post-Appraisal	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%	3.8%	1.7%	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Employed ^d	40.0	29.6	22.4	30.8	30.2	31.0	27.9	31.4
Sample Size	50	27	85	104	116	116	43	541

SOURCE and NOTES: See Table 6.2.

TABLE G.2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAM STATUSES OF AFDC-FG MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Program Status	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total	Weighted Total
Active at Least One Day in a GAIN Component	53.7	55.2	47.6	42.7	56.2	29.5	53.5	47.3	47.3
Deregistered, Not Active	21.3	17.2	13.4	12.9	23.2	17.9	7.0	17.2	14.9
Deferred, Not Deregistered or Active	23.8	24.1	18.3	35.5	14.3	37.5	23.3	26.0	25.6
Not Deferred, Deregistered or Active	1.3	3.4	20.7	8.8	6.3	15.2	16.3	9.5	12.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	80	58	82	124	112	112	43	611	611

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The totals in the first column, entitled "Unweighted Total," are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county. The totals in the second column, entitled "Weighted Total," are weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

"Active" means that the individual attended job search, education, training and work experience activities for at least one day. It does not include orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

TABLE G.3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAM STATUSES OF AFDC-U MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Program Status	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total	Weighted Total
Active at Least One Day in a GAIN Component	62.0	66.7	42.4	43.3	58.6	25.0	67.4	50.3	49.5
Deregistered, Not Active	34.0	18.5	21.2	26.0	23.3	26.7	2.3	24.5	19.6
Deferred, Not Deregistered or Active	0.0	7.4	10.6	27.9	6.0	24.1	20.9	13.3	16.9
Not Deferred, Deregistered or Active	4.0	7.4	25.9	2.9	12.0	24.1	9.3	11.8	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	50	27	85	104	116	116	43	541	541

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The totals in the first column, entitled "Unweighted Total," are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county. The totals in the second column, entitled "Weighted Total," are weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Activity indicators include individuals who participated in a particular activity, or who were in a particular status, for at least one day during the follow-up period.

"Active" means that the individual attended job search, education, training and work experience activities for at least one day. It does not include orientation, appraisal, assessment, GED receipt or employment.

Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

TABLE G.4

PERCENT OF ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY THE NUMBER OF DAYS REGISTERED FOR GAIN
DURING THE FOUR MONTHS FOLLOWING ORIENTATION,
BY GAIN STATUS AND ASSISTANCE CATEGORY

Number of Days Registered	Mandatory Registrants		Voluntary Registrants
	AFDC-FG	AFDC-U	AFDC-FG
At Least 106 Days	85.5%	77.5%	67.6%
At Least 91 Days	88.5	80.3	70.6
At Least 76 Days	91.1	85.0	75.3
At Least 61 Days	93.4	87.7	79.6
At Least 46 Days	95.7	89.9	84.0
At Least 31 Days	98.2	94.5	92.9
At Least 16 Days	99.5	97.3	96.3
At Least 1 Day	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	605	534	273

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The sample for this table is weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

Fresno is not included in these calculations because of unavailable data.

All percentage calculations are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row.

TABLE G.5

PERCENT OF AFDC-U MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS,
BY PERCENT OF DAYS ACTIVE OUT OF DAYS REGISTERED
DURING THE FOUR MONTHS FOLLOWING ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Percent of Days Active Out of Days Registered	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Un- weighted Total
Never Active	40.4%	29.6%	58.3%	53.8%	40.4%	74.6%	35.0%	49.7%
Ever Active	59.5	70.3	41.7	46.1	59.6	25.5	65.0	50.5
At Least 1 Percent	59.5	70.3	41.7	46.1	59.6	25.5	65.0	50.5
At Least 10 Percent	57.4	59.2	39.3	37.4	48.1	22.9	50.0	43.9
At Least 20 Percent	55.3	55.5	32.2	31.6	37.5	18.5	35.0	37.7
At Least 30 Percent	46.8	37.0	28.6	28.7	28.8	12.4	32.5	30.8
At Least 40 Percent	42.5	37.0	20.3	22.9	25.9	8.0	32.5	26.6
At Least 50 Percent	31.9	29.6	20.3	19.1	20.1	6.2	30.0	21.6
At Least 60 Percent	25.5	29.6	17.9	12.4	15.3	5.3	30.0	17.8
At Least 70 Percent	17.0	25.9	15.5	8.6	11.5	4.4	30.0	13.9
At Least 80 Percent	12.7	18.5	11.9	6.7	8.6	4.4	27.5	11.0
At Least 90 Percent	10.6	7.4	9.5	3.8	4.8	2.6	17.5	7.2
100 Percent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sample Size	47	27	84	104	104	114	40	520

SOURCE and NOTES: See Table 6.4.

APPENDIX H

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TABLE H.1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DEFERRAL REASONS AND AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME
SPENT IN DEFERRAL STATUS FOR AFDC-FG MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS WHO WERE DEFERRED
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Deferral Reason, Percent Deferred, and Average Amount of Time Deferred	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Un- weighted Total
In School, Child Under Six (%)	0.0	0.0	25.0	6.1	2.5	0.0	7.1	3.9
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	0	110	94	60	0	121	101
Alcoholism or Drug Addiction (%)	9.4	0.0	5.0	1.5	0.0	2.9	0.0	3.2
Average Number of Days Deferred	49	0	73	53	0	33	0	48
Emotional or Mental Problems (%)	15.6	8.7	0.0	7.6	5.0	2.9	7.1	7.1
Average Number of Days Deferred	53	68	0	63	60	65	93	61
Legal Difficulties (%)	12.5	8.7	5.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	7.1	5.2
Average Number of Days Deferred	81	68	61	0	0	53	29	67
No Legal Right to Work in United States (%)	0.0	4.3	0.0	4.5	0.0	5.7	0.0	2.8
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	121	0	121	0	100	0	110
Severe Family Crisis (%)	25.0	47.8	20.0	9.1	10.0	21.4	14.3	19.2
Average Number of Days Deferred	43	61	64	98	81	76	111	70
Good Standing in Union (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Temporarily Laid Off with Call Back Date (%)	3.1	0.0	0.0	7.6	5.0	4.3	0.0	4.1
Average Number of Days Deferred	100	0	0	82	104	69	0	85
Employed 15 Hours or More per Week (%)	28.1	21.7	40.0	43.9	57.5	30.0	28.6	36.6
Average Number of Days Deferred	74	78	71	77	81	69	121	77
Medically-Verified Illness (%)	25.0	17.4	15.0	27.3	17.5	28.6	28.6	24.3
Average Number of Days Deferred	56	89	35	96	74	65	65	73

(continued)

TABLE H.1 (continued)

Deferral Reason, Percent Deferred, and Average Amount of Time Deferred	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Un-weighted Total
No Child Care (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	4.3	7.1	1.8
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	0	0	121	0	44	30	56
No Transportation (%)	6.3	0.0	0.0	7.6	2.5	20.0	0.0	8.2
Average Number of Days Deferred	23	0	0	88	1	85	0	71
Sample Size	32	23	20	66	40	70	14	265

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

All percentage calculations and averages are based on all registrants noted in the "Sample Size" row.

Distributions may add to more than 100.0 percent because registrants could be deferred more than once for different reasons. Included here are reasons for the first, second, and third deferral.

TABLE H.2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DEFERRAL REASONS AND AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME
SPENT IN DEFERRAL STATUS FOR AFDC-U MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS WHO WERE DEFERRED
WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Deferral Reason, Percent Deferred, and Average Amount of Time Deferred	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanis- laus	Santa Clara	Un- weighted Total
In School, Child Under Six (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	0	0	43	0	0	0	43
Alcoholism or Drug Addiction (%)	0.0	0.0	6.7	8.2	4.0	4.3	0.0	4.8
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	0	22	69	41	62	0	60
Emotional or Mental Problems (%)	28.6	0.0	0.0	3.3	4.0	6.5	6.7	6.5
Average Number of Days Deferred	50	0	0	73	66	84	43	60
Legal Difficulties (%)	14.3	0.0	6.7	13.1	12.0	0.0	20.0	9.6
Average Number of Days Deferred	33	0	121	52	46	0	85	59
No Legal Right to Work in United States (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.6	0.0	6.5	0.0	3.7
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	0	0	108	0	96	0	103
Severe Family Crisis (%)	57.1	50.0	13.3	11.5	0.0	8.7	33.3	18.2
Average Number of Days Deferred	23	43	47	48	0	82	72	46
Good Standing in Union (%)	0.0	16.7	0.0	1.6	8.0	0.0	0.0	2.5
Average Number of Days Deferred	93	0	0	91	121	0	0	103
Temporarily Laid Off with Call Back Date (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.8	12.0	6.5	0.0	8.0
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	0	0	78	35	79	0	71
Employed 15 Hours or More per Week (%)	0.0	16.7	46.7	44.3	32.0	37.0	46.7	35.5
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	120	68	62	45	70	119	71
Medically-Verified Illness (%)	14.3	16.7	33.3	9.8	36.0	17.4	6.7	16.9
Average Number of Days Deferred	43	41	37	66	74	85	13	63

(continued)

TABLE H.2 (continued)

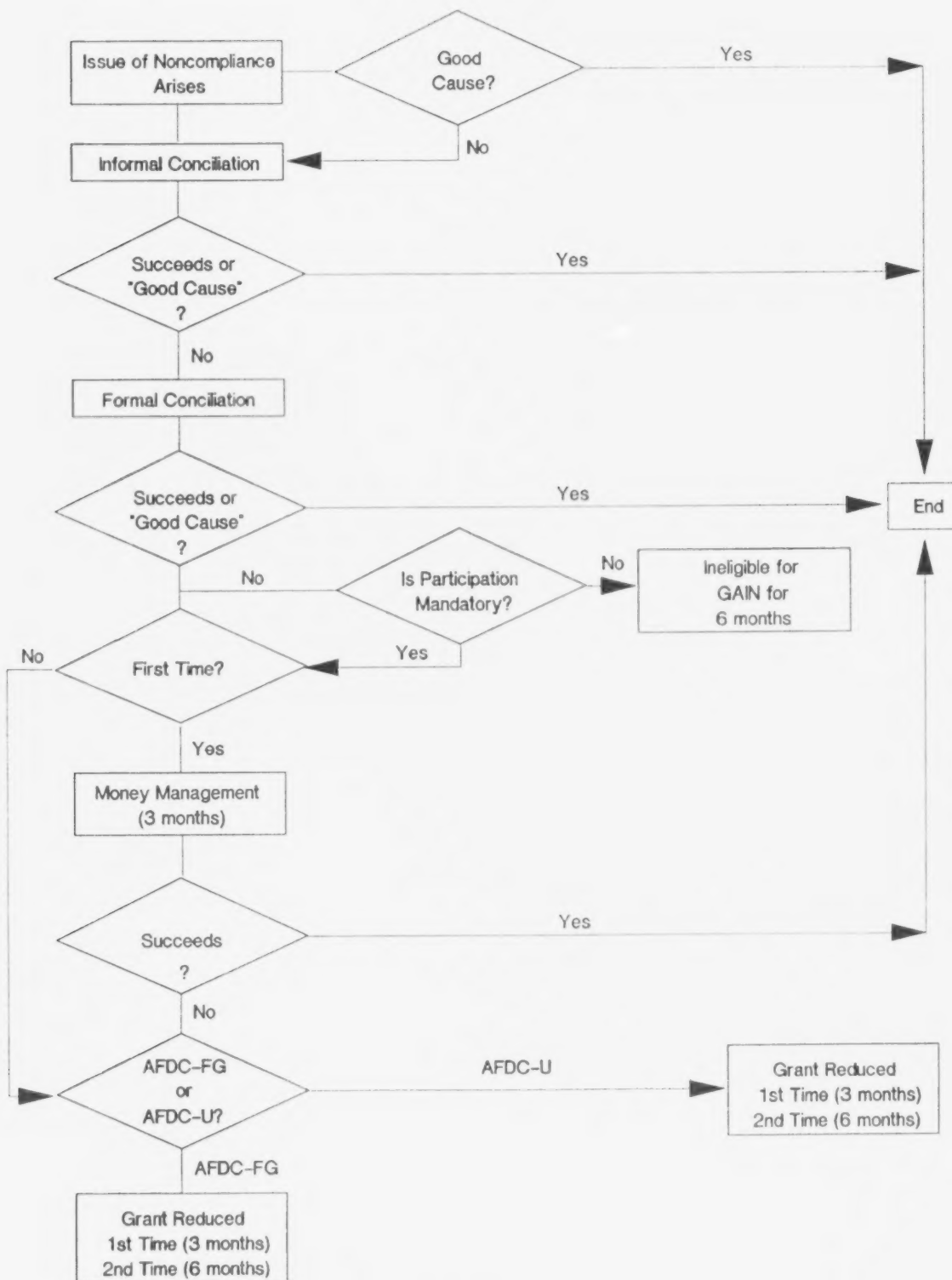
Deferral Reason, Percent Deferred, and Average Amount of Time Deferred	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Un-weighted Total
No Child Care (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.5
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	0	0	0	0	99	0	99
No Transportation (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.9	0.0	19.6	0.0	6.0
Average Number of Days Deferred	0	0	0	81	0	97	0	93
Sample Size	7	6	15	61	25	46	15	175

SOURCE and NOTES: See Table H.1.

APPENDIX I

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FIGURE I. 1
GAIN SANCTIONING PROCESS



APPENDIX J

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FIGURE J. 1

RECOMMENDED EDUCATIONAL REFERRALS
ON THE BASIS OF THE BASIC SKILLS TEST

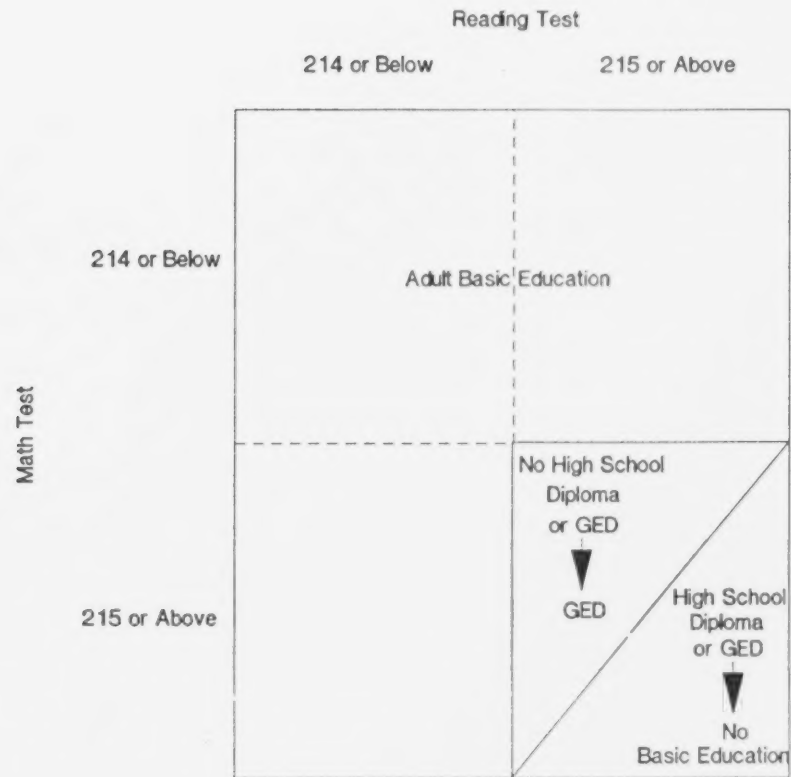


TABLE J.1

REFERRAL AND PARTICIPATION RATES FOR AFDC-FG
ORIENTATION ATTENDERS, BY COUNTYA. PERCENT OF AFDC-FG ORIENTATION ATTENDERS DETERMINED TO BE IN NEED OF
BASIC EDUCATION WHO WERE REFERRED TO AND PARTICIPATED IN BASIC EDUCATION WITHIN
FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Basic Education Components	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Adult Basic Education								
Referred	37.0%	35.1%	9.1%	22.1%	20.0%	38.2%	28.6%	28.2%
Participated	18.5	27.0	0.0	15.1	11.7	7.9	17.9	13.8
GED Preparation								
Referred	29.6	10.8	22.7	10.5	40.0	28.9	7.1	22.5
Participated	29.6	10.8	13.6	7.0	28.3	10.5	3.6	14.8
English as a Second Language								
Referred	3.7	0.0	9.1	10.5	3.3	3.9	17.9	6.5
Participated	3.7	0.0	9.1	9.3	1.7	1.3	17.9	5.3
Total								
Referred	70.4	45.9	40.9	41.9	60.0	69.7	53.6	56.0
Participated	51.9	37.8	22.7	30.2	41.7	19.7	39.3	33.7
Number Of Orientation Attenders Determined To Be In Need Of Basic Education	27	37	22	86	60	76	28	336

B. PERCENT OF AFDC-FG ORIENTATION ATTENDERS REFERRED TO
BASIC EDUCATION WHO PARTICIPATED WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF
ORIENTATION, BY BASIC EDUCATION COMPONENT, BY COUNTY

Basic Education Components	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Adult Basic Education	50.0%	76.9%	0.0%	68.3%	58.5%	20.7%	62.6%	48.9%
GED Preparation	100.0	100.0	60.0	66.7	70.7	36.3	50.7	65.8
English as a Second Language	100.0	100.0	100.0	88.6	77.8	33.3	100.0	81.5
Total	73.8	82.4	55.5	72.0	69.5	28.3	73.3	60.2
Number Of Orientation Attenders Referred To Basic Education	19	17	9	36	36	53	15	185

(continued)

TABLE J.1 (continued)

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The totals on this table are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county. Because of this weighting, sample sizes calculated from total column percentages on panel A will not exactly match actual sample sizes on panel B or on other tables in this chapter.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Those determined to be in need of basic education were those individuals who had no high school diploma or GED, scored less than 215 on the reading or math basic skills test, had limited English ability, or were referred for no reason. This table only includes program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

"Referred" means that the registrant was assigned to a basic education program as a GAIN component.

"Participated" means that the registrant participated in the activity at least one day.

Distributions may add to more than 100.0 percent because sample members can be referred to or participate in more than one activity.

TABLE J.2

REFERRAL AND PARTICIPATION RATES FOR AFDC-U
ORIENTATION ATTENDERS, BY COUNTYA. PERCENT OF AFDC-U ORIENTATION ATTENDERS DETERMINED TO BE IN NEED OF
BASIC EDUCATION WHO WERE REFERRED TO AND PARTICIPATED IN BASIC EDUCATION WITHIN
FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Basic Education Components	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Adult Basic Education								
Referred	26.9%	33.3%	16.7%	23.2%	30.6%	33.7%	11.1%	26.2%
Participated	11.5	26.7	9.5	13.4	22.6	9.6	7.4	13.8
GED Preparation								
Referred	15.4	13.3	19.0	3.7	24.2	26.5	7.4	15.8
Participated	3.8	6.7	16.7	2.4	14.5	3.6	0.0	6.2
English as a Second Language								
Referred	23.1	20.0	4.8	15.9	3.2	10.8	40.7	15.4
Participated	23.1	13.3	2.4	13.4	1.6	2.4	29.6	11.4
Total								
Referred	65.4	60.0	40.5	42.7	58.1	71.1	55.6	56.7
Participated	38.5	40.0	28.6	29.3	38.7	15.7	37.0	31.0
Number Of Orientation Attenders Determined To Be In Need Of Basic Education	26	15	42	82	62	83	27	337

B. PERCENT OF AFDC-U GAIN ORIENTATION ATTENDERS REFERRED TO
BASIC EDUCATION WHO PARTICIPATED WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF
ORIENTATION, BY BASIC EDUCATION COMPONENT, BY COUNTY

Basic Education Components	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Unweighted Total
Adult Basic Education	42.8%	80.2%	56.9%	57.8%	73.9%	28.5%	66.7%	52.7%
GED Preparation	24.7	50.4	87.9	64.9	59.9	13.6	0.0	39.2
English as a Second Language	100.0	66.5	50.0	84.3	50.0	22.2	72.7	74.0
Total	58.9	66.7	70.6	68.6	66.6	22.1	66.5	54.7
Number Of Orientation Attenders Referred To Basic Education	17	9	17	35	36	59	15	188

SOURCE and NOTES: See Table J.1.

TABLE J.3

PERCENT OF AFDC-FG MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS IN SPECIFIED STATUSES AND INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES, WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Activity Measure	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Un-Weighted Total	Weighted Total
<u>Orientation Attenders</u>									
Determined to Need Basic Education	33.8%	63.8%	26.8%	69.4%	53.6%	67.9%	65.1%	53.1%	58.4%
Participated in Basic Education	17.5	25.9	6.1	21.0	22.3	13.4	27.9	18.2	19.9
<u>Orientation Attenders Determined to Need Basic Education</u>									
Referred to Basic Education	70.4	45.9	40.9	41.9	60.0	69.7	53.6	56.0	53.8
Participated in Basic Education	51.9	37.8	22.7	30.2	41.7	19.7	39.3	33.7	30.1
First Activity was Basic Education	33.3	37.8	22.7	26.7	40.1	18.4	32.2	29.2	29.5
First Activity was Job Club/Job Search	14.8	2.7	9.1	4.7	15.0	3.9	7.1	7.8	7.4
First Activity was Self-Initiated Program	0.0	8.1	4.5	5.8	1.7	3.9	3.6	3.9	4.1
First Status was Deferral	25.9	32.4	18.2	46.5	26.7	47.4	35.7	36.6	37.5
First Status was Deregistration	22.2	13.5	13.6	8.1	8.3	5.3	7.1	10.2	8.1
Never in Any Status or Activity	3.7	5.4	31.8	8.1	8.3	21.1	14.3	12.2	13.4
<u>Sample Size</u>									
Orientation Attenders	80	58	82	124	112	112	43	611	611
Orientation Attenders Determined To Need Basic Education	27	37	22	86	60	76	28	336	336

(continued)

TABLE J.3 (continued)

SOURCE: Members of MDRC's participant flow sample who attended orientation within two months of registration.

NOTES: The totals in the first column, entitled "Unweighted Total" are calculated in such a way as to give equal weight to each county. The totals in the second column, entitled "Weighted Total," are weighted to reflect county caseload sizes.

The order in which the counties appear on the table is based on the number of registrants in each county's GAIN program as of December 1987. Napa had the lowest number and Santa Clara had the highest.

Basic Education includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED Preparation (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). This only includes program-referred basic education. Very few self-initiated registrants were active in basic education programs.

Those determined to be in need of basic education were those individuals who had no high school diploma or GED, scored less than 215 on the reading or math basic skills test, had limited English ability, or were referred for no reason.

"Participated" means that the registrant participated in the activity at least one day.

"Referred" means that the registrant was assigned to a basic education program as a GAIN component.

TABLE J.4

PERCENT OF AFDC-U MANDATORY ORIENTATION ATTENDERS IN SPECIFIED STATUSES AND INVOLVED IN SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES WITHIN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIENTATION, BY COUNTY

Activity Measure	Napa	San Mateo	Butte	Ventura	Kern	Stanislaus	Santa Clara	Un-Weighted Total	Weighted Total
<u>Orientation Attenders</u>									
Determined to Need Basic Education	52.0%	55.6%	49.4%	78.8%	53.4%	71.6%	62.8%	61.0%	62.7%
Participated in Basic Education	22.0	33.3	15.3	24.0	20.7	12.1	30.2	21.1	21.1
<u>Orientation Attenders Determined to Need Basic Education</u>									
Referred to Basic Education	65.4	60.0	40.5	42.7	58.1	71.1	55.6	56.7	56.6
Participated in Basic Education	38.5	40.0	28.6	29.3	38.7	15.7	37.0	31.0	33.0
First Activity was Basic Education	30.8	13.3	23.8	25.6	27.4	13.2	40.7	24.5	26.1
First Activity was Job Club/Job Search	30.8	40.0	7.1	13.4	25.8	6.0	14.8	18.4	14.9
First Activity was Self-Initiated Program	0.0	0.0	2.4	2.4	0.0	0.0	3.7	1.1	1.5
First Status was Deferral	7.7	26.7	19.0	47.6	19.4	30.1	29.6	27.0	29.4
First Status was Deregistration	26.9	13.3	16.7	8.5	17.7	19.3	0.0	15.9	12.4
Never in Any Status or Activity	3.8	6.7	31.0	2.4	9.7	31.5	11.1	13.1	15.7
<u>Sample Size</u>									
Orientation Attenders	50	27	85	104	116	116	43	541	541
Orientation Attenders Determined to Need Basic Education	26	15	42	82	62	83	27	337	337

SOURCE and NOTES: See Table J.3.

APPENDIX K

TABLE K.1

EXAMPLE OF AN ASSESSMENT PROVIDED BY OUTSIDE ASSESSOR

A. <u>Personal Characteristics:</u>	During the initial interview, _____ presented herself as a somewhat soft-spoken but friendly young woman. She indicated an immediate interest in obtaining computer training, specifically data entry. On the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, _____ was shown to be an ESFP personality type. Generally, this personality type is outgoing, easygoing, accepting, friendly, they enjoy everything and make things more fun for others by their enjoyment. They like sports and making things. They know what's going on and join in eagerly. They find remembering facts easier than mastering theories. They are best in situations that need sound common sense and practical ability with people as well as with things. On a life events checklist, it was noted that _____ reported very few changes in her life over the course of the last year which are related to stress.
B. <u>Academic Skills:</u>	The Adult Basic Learning Examination Level 3 was administered with the following results obtained: Vocabulary 58th percentile, Reading Comprehension 70th percentile, Spelling 83rd percentile, Number Operations 72nd percentile. Overall, academic levels were typically in the significantly above average range, and it would appear that _____ should have no problems in successfully completing a classroom training program.
C. <u>Learning Abilities:</u>	On the Barsch Learning Styles Inventory, _____ showed an almost equal preference for visual learning and auditory learning. This indicates that she likes to hear and/or read study material she is required to learn. Her preference for these learning modalities should be very beneficial in enhancing her successful completion of a classroom training program where typically both visual and auditory material are presented. On an inventory related to brain preference, _____ was shown to be a right brain thinker. Generally, right brain thinkers like to look at the whole picture rather than the small details of a situation. They are usually somewhat imaginative, intuitive, and have artistic interests.
D. <u>Vocational Interests/Abilities:</u>	On the Career Ability Placement Survey, _____ scored in the average to significantly above average range for Manual Speed and Dexterity, Word Knowledge, Numerical Ability, Verbal Reasoning, and Spatial Relations. Mechanical Reasoning, Language Usage, and Perceptual Speed and Accuracy were in the somewhat below average range. _____ demonstrated several of the major aptitudes which are associated with success in clerical related occupations. On the Career Occupational Preference System, high areas of tested interest included Skilled Science, Consumer Economics, and Clerical.
E. <u>Job/Training Recommendations:</u>	Based upon the results of the assessment and in conversation with _____ the following recommendation has been made: Prep/Classroom Training in a PIC-funded or other general clerical training program with emphasis on computer operation. Training outcomes could include employment in any of the following areas: 1. Computer operator DOT 213.362-010 2. General clerk DOT 209.562-010 3. File clerk DOT 206.367-014 4. Clerk typist DOT 203.362-010

(continued)

TABLE K.1 (continued)

<u>Certification:</u>	I have received a copy of my Employment Development Plan and appropriate supporting documents which inform me of the following: 1. The job(s) and/or job participation activities for which I am best suited, based on my job assessment results. 2. The normal entry-level, and journey-level (if applicable), wage ranges for recommended jobs. 3. The normal working conditions for the recommended jobs. 4. The normal physical and mental demands of recommended jobs based on federal and state job norms. 5. The normal working hours for recommended jobs based on federal and state norms. 6. Career ladders (or advancement/promotion possibilities) in the recommended jobs based on federal and state norms. This information has been reviewed with me and explained to me. _____ (Signature)
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